それでも町は廻っている

通称"それ町"

Soredemo Machi ha Mawatteiru

14

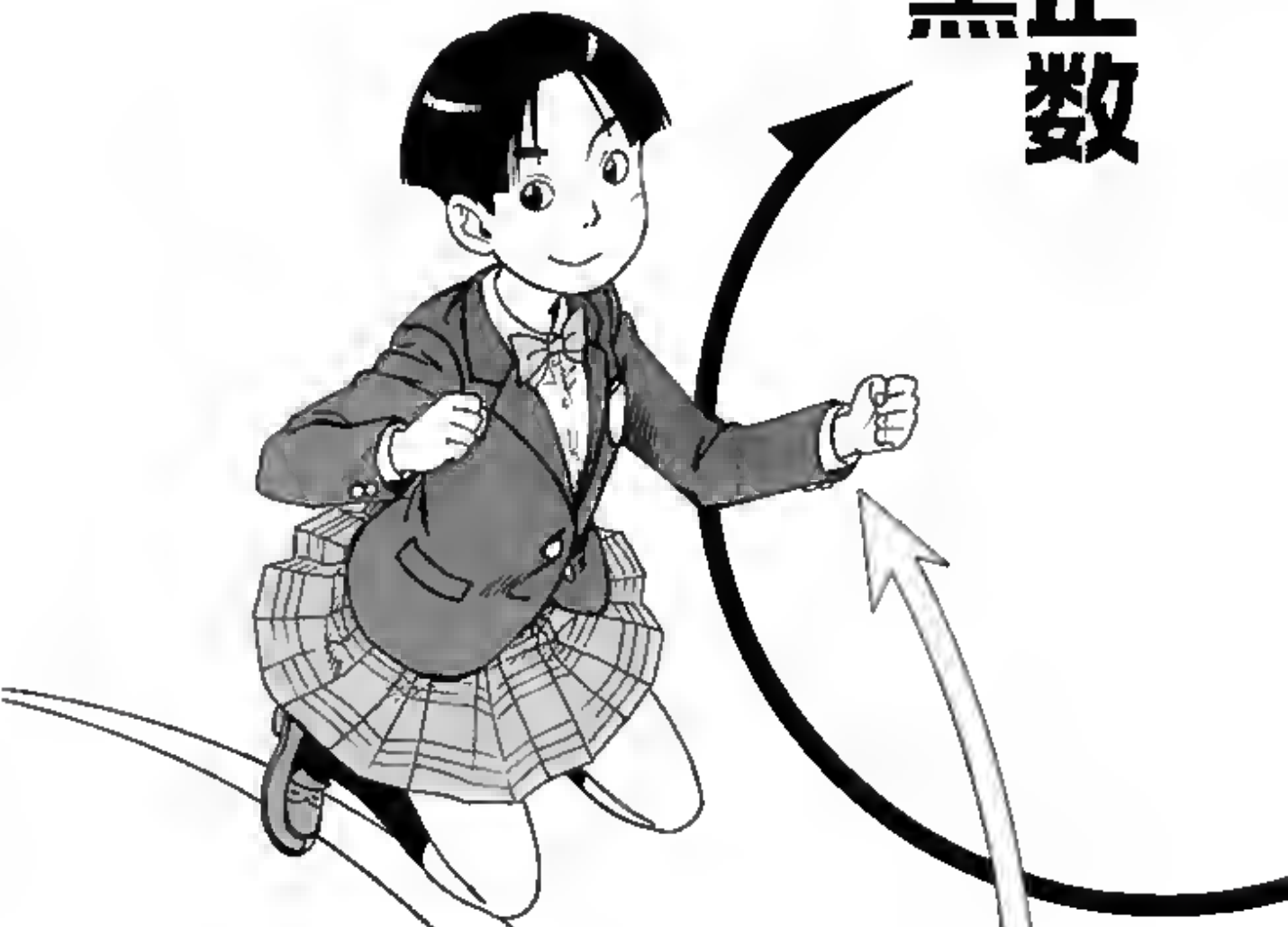
石黒正数

Ishiguro Masakazu

YOUNG KING COMICS

YOUNG KING COMICS

ISHIGURO MASAKAZU
石黒正数

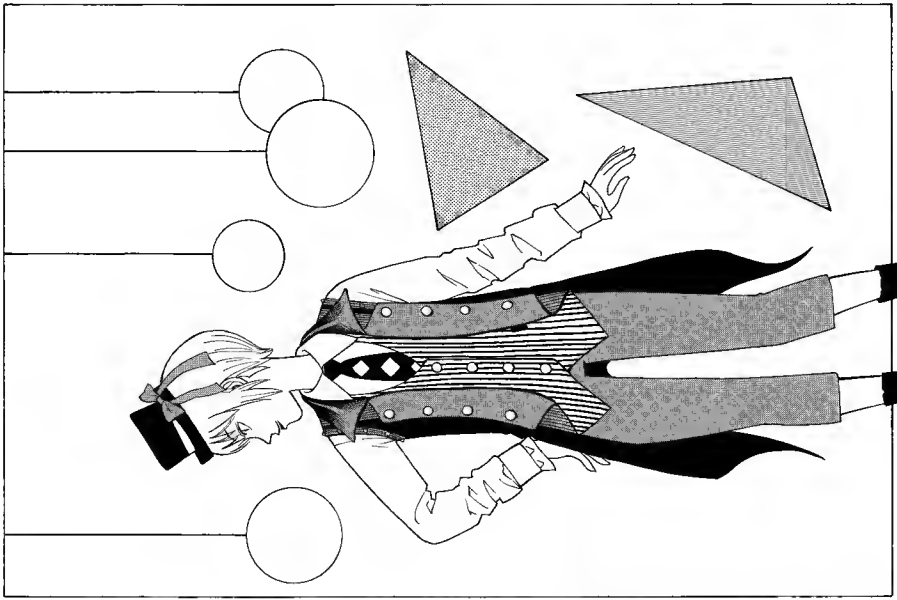


通称"それ町"

それでも町は廻っている

14

第106話
図書館の回し者

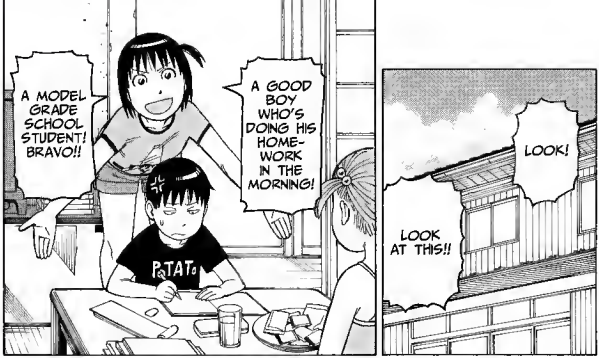


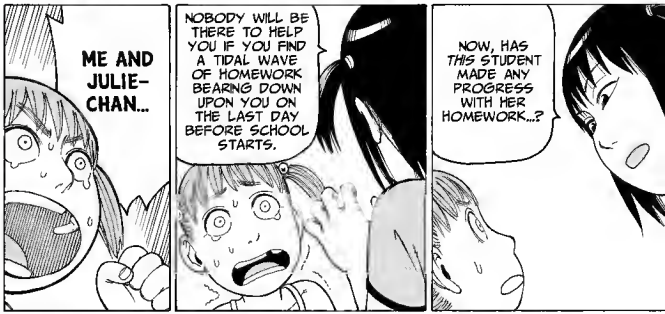
CHAPTER 114 LIBRARY AGENT

NAMEPLATE: KON DENSUKE

BOTTLE: ACAI AND PEACH

SPLASH
ガジャボ
CRACKLE
バカキ
DRIP
トトトト
HMM?
バシャ
SPLASH
GAAAHHH!
SIGH~
DID I JUST HEAR A SCREAM...?
MAYBE I SHOULD GO CHECK...
PACE
うろ
PACE
うろ
OR SHOULD I WAIT AND SEE?


A MODEL GRADE SCHOOL STUDENT! BRAVO!!
A GOOD BOY WHO'S DOING HIS HOME-WORK IN THE MORNING!
LOOK!
LOOK AT THIS!!


ME AND JULIE-CHAN...
NOBODY WILL BE THERE TO HELP YOU IF YOU FIND A TIDAL WAVE OF HOMEWORK BEARING DOWN UPON YOU ON THE LAST DAY BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS.
NOW, HAS *THIS* STUDENT MADE ANY PROGRESS WITH HER HOMEWORK...?

TAKERU-KUN!
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT!
...ARE GOING OUT TO PLAY!!
AND YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION!

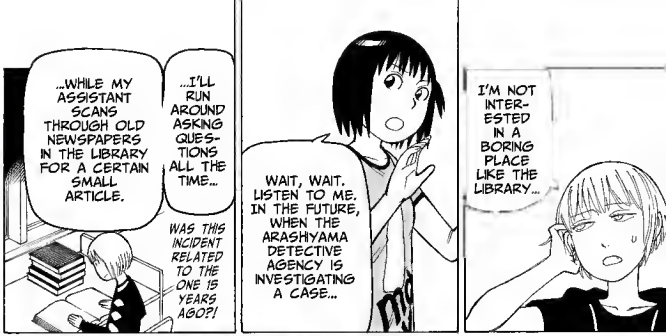
POOH!
POOL!
THE POOL.
HUH? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
POOH!
POO!
PO!
HOOOH!!
HEY!
I'M GOING NOW!
WATCH OUT FOR CARS AND STRANGE PEOPLE!
...IT'S FINALLY QUIET...
I GUESS I'LL ALSO HEAD OUT.
WELL...
Gulll!!

KAPOK
パン
CLICK
CLACK
ポケ
ポケ
SIGNS: KAPOK BREAD

IT'S OKAY. SORRY ABOUT THAT. THANK YOU.
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?!
WHOA! YOU JUST STUCK YOUR HEAD IN LIKE YOU BELONG HERE.
スポ
SLIP

THE LIBRARY.
ARE YOU ON YOUR WAY SOME-WHERE?
NOTHING HAPPENED, REALLY.

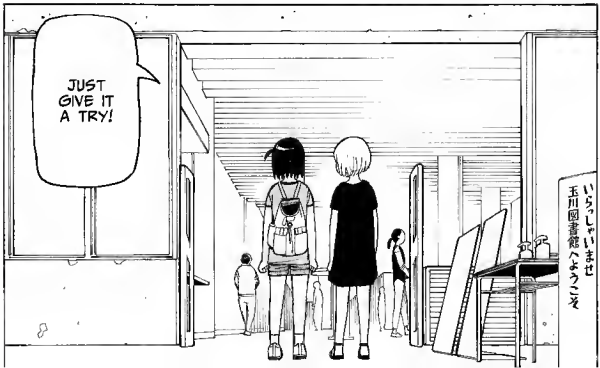
I WAS PLANNING ON SPENDING THE ENTIRE DAY AT THE LIBRARY.
WANNA JOIN ME?
WHAT IS THERE TO DO AT THE LIBRARY FOR A WHOLE DAY?
LOTS!! MORE THAN ENOUGH TO FILL UP A WHOLE DAY!!
HOW OFTEN DO YOU GO TO THE LIBRARY, SENPAI?
I HAVEN'T BEEN TO THE LIBRARY SINCE OUR CLASS WENT IN GRADE SCHOOL.
HOW OFTEN DO I GO?
OH... WOW...! FOR REAL?
SENPAI, ARE YOU FREE TODAY? DO YOU HAVE ANY I.D. ON YOU?
I HAVE MY INSURANCE CARD IN MY WALLET.
YEAH...
GOOD! THEN I'LL TEACH YOU THE PROPER WAY...
...TO USE A LIBRARY!


I'M NOT INTERESTED IN A BORING PLACE LIKE THE LIBRARY...
WAIT, WAIT. LISTEN TO ME. IN THE FUTURE, WHEN THE ARASHIYAMA DETECTIVE AGENCY IS INVESTIGATING A CASE...
...I'LL RUN AROUND ASKING QUESTIONS ALL THE TIME...
WAS THIS INCIDENT RELATED TO THE ONE 15 YEARS AGO?!
...WHILE MY ASSISTANT SCANS THROUGH OLD NEWSPAPERS IN THE LIBRARY FOR A CERTAIN SMALL ARTICLE.

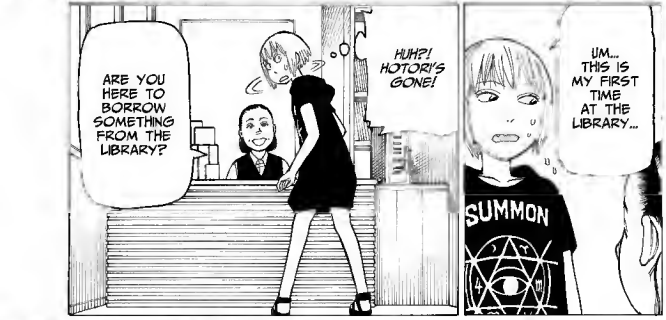
BUILDING: ...TAMAGAWA LIBRARY

HAVEN'T YOU SEEN STUFF LIKE THAT HAPPEN IN NOVELS AND TV SHOWS?
WE HAVE TO BE PREPARED.
OKAY, BUT WHY AM I YOUR ASSISTANT?
UM, ANYWAY!
IT'LL BE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ONCE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE REFUSING TO ENJOY.

SIGN: WELCOME TO TAMAGAWA LIBRARY



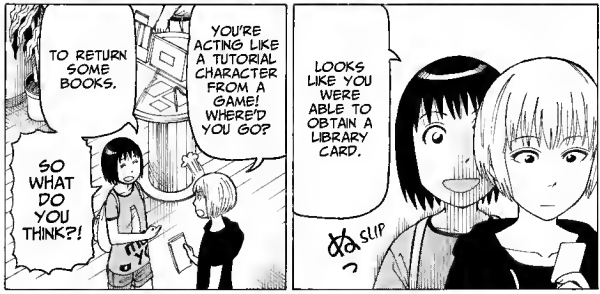
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, JUST ASK.
FIRST, TELL THE RECEPTIONIST-LOOKING LADY THAT THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME HERE.

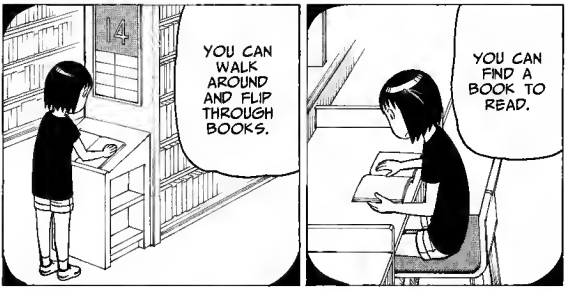

UM... THIS IS MY FIRST TIME AT THE LIBRARY...
HUH?! HOTORI'S GONE!
ARE YOU HERE TO BORROW SOMETHING FROM THE LIBRARY?

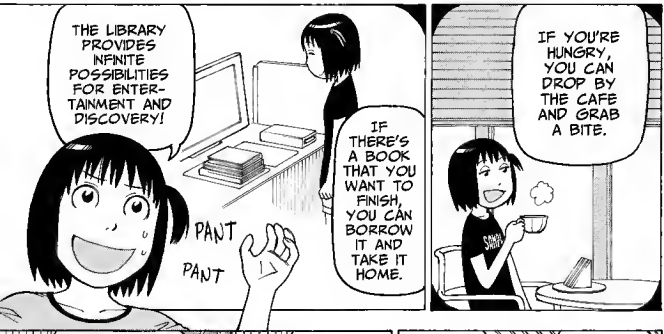
FIRST, YOU'LL NEED TO GET A CARD. PLEASE STEP OVER TO THE COUNTER AND COMPLETE THIS FORM.
WHERE'D SHE GO...?!

YOU'LL NEED THIS CARD WHENEVER YOU VISIT THE LIBRARY.
YOU CAN READ THIS PAMPHLET TO LEARN MORE.
PLEASE ASK IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.
TAA-DAA!
ジャジャジャーン

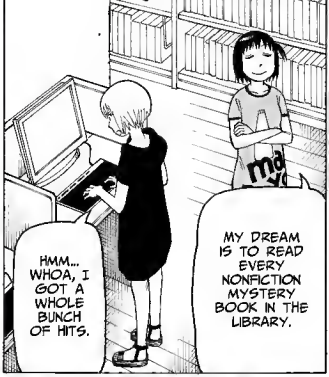
CARD: ODA DISTRICT LIBRARY CARD


LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE ABLE TO OBTAIN A LIBRARY CARD.
SLIP
YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A TUTORIAL CHARACTER FROM A GAME! WHERE'D YOU GO?
TO RETURN SOME BOOKS.
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?!


14
YOU CAN WALK AROUND AND FLIP THROUGH BOOKS.
YOU CAN FIND A BOOK TO READ.


THE LIBRARY PROVIDES INFINITE POSSIBILITIES FOR ENTERTAINMENT AND DISCOVERY!
PANT
PANT
IF THERE'S A BOOK THAT YOU WANT TO FINISH, YOU CAN BORROW IT AND TAKE IT HOME.
IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, YOU CAN DROP BY THE CAFE AND GRAB A BITE.

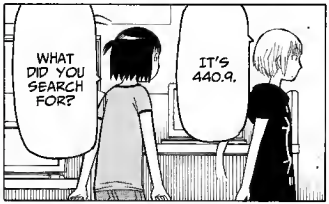
TRUE... IT'S HARD TO UNDERSTAND HOW BOOKS ARE SORTED WHEN YOU'RE JUST STARTING OUT. IT'S NOT VERY INTUITIVE...
AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT BOOKS ARE WHERE...
NOT SURE WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO NOW.
OKAY, BUT THERE AREN'T ANY BOOKS I WANT TO READ.
SUMMON



検索コーナー
YOU CAN START BY RUNNING A SEARCH.
PUT IN KEYWORDS THAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN, AND IT'LL TELL YOU WHERE TO FIND RELEVANT BOOKS.

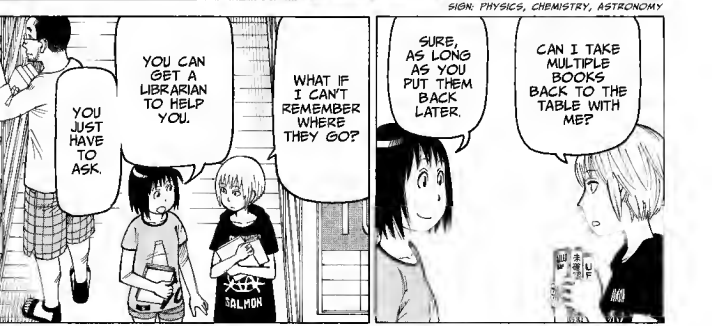
SIGN: SEARCH CORNER

I CAN SEARCH FOR ANY-THING?
ANYTHING YOU WANT! YOU CAN RUN SEARCHES ON NAMES, PHRASES LIKE "UNSOLVED MYSTERIES," WORDS LIKE "DETECTIVE"...

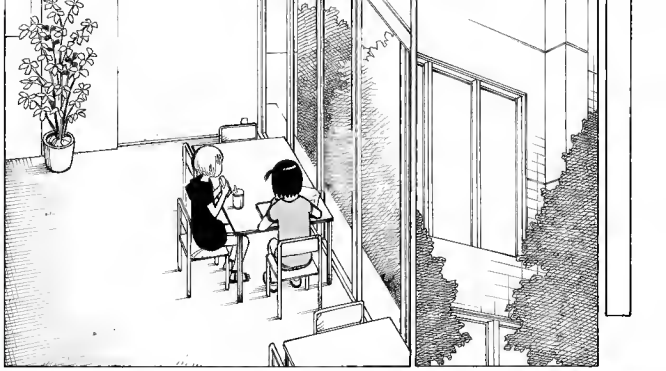


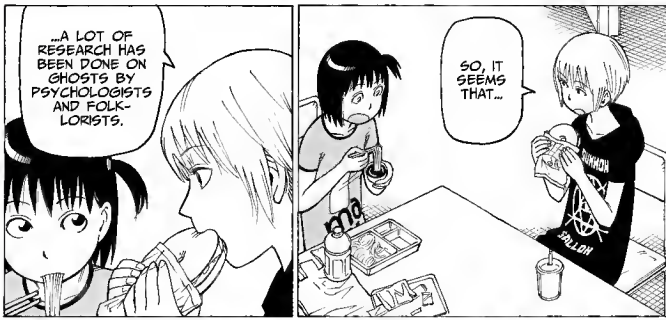
UFOS?!
SEARCH RESULTS
YWORD UFO
CRETS OF THE AKASHIC RECORDS AKASHI HIKOAKI
LYING OBJECT IN ASIA ASHIYA HIROHI
HE ADAMSKI PRIMER YAMADA ICHIRO
SUSPICIOUS FLYING OBJECTS AYANO SHI
5. ALIENS WE WANT TO MEET ONOGERA KOUJI
6. BEAUTIFUL UFO DESIGN KUSHINO MIKA
7. ALIEN ENCYCLOPEDIA UCHUU JIN
8. ALIENS DON'T EXISTI NEJIKURE KATA BUTSU
9. ALIENS AND ME KUSHINO MIKA
10. AREA 51 UCHUU JIN

WOW! I ACTUALLY FOUND A BOOK IN THIS PLACE.
OH, UFO BOOKS ARE IN THE ASTRONOMY SECTION...
HERE IT IS!
HM...
440.9 SHOULD BE AROUND HERE, RIGHT?
25
物理学
化学
天文学
420～449
～467
SIGN: PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, ASTRONOMY


WHAT IF I CAN'T REMEMBER WHERE THEY GO?
YOU CAN GET A LIBRARIAN TO HELP YOU.
YOU JUST HAVE TO ASK.
SALMON
CAN I TAKE MULTIPLE BOOKS BACK TO THE TABLE WITH ME?
SURE, AS LONG AS YOU PUT THEM BACK LATER.

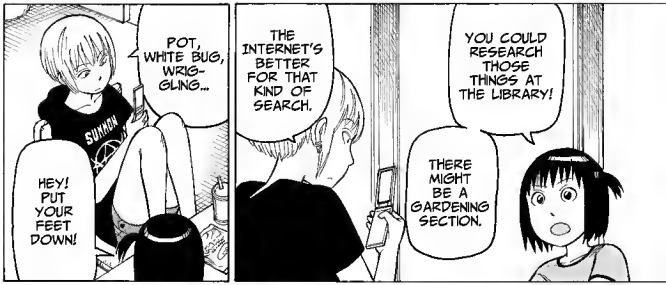
I'LL GO LOOK FOR BOOKS ON GHOSTS...
SALMON
SALMON

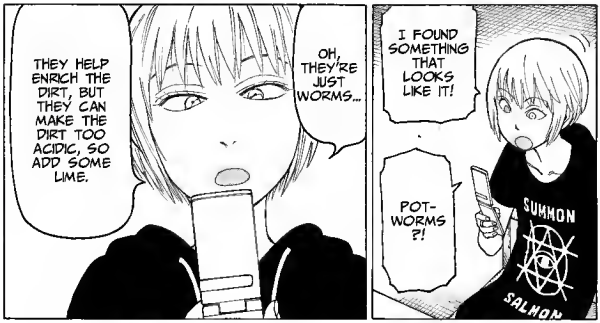


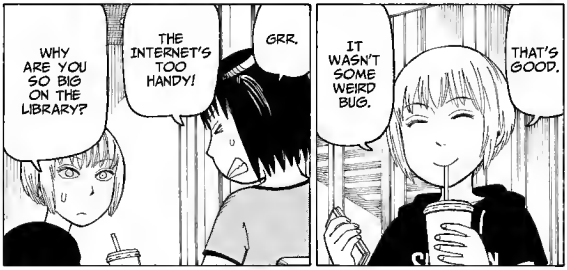

...A LOT OF RESEARCH HAS BEEN DONE ON GHOSTS BY PSYCHOLOGISTS AND FOLK-LORISTS.
SO, IT SEEMS THAT...

WHAT WERE THE COPS DOING THERE THIS MORNING?
OH, YEAH.
SO THIS IS THE SOURCE OF ALL OF YOUR USELESS KNOWLEDGE.
YOU'LL PICK UP ALL KINDS OF USELESS TRIVIA!
SEE? YOU CAN MAKE ALL KINDS OF DISCOV-ERIES IN THE LIBRARY!

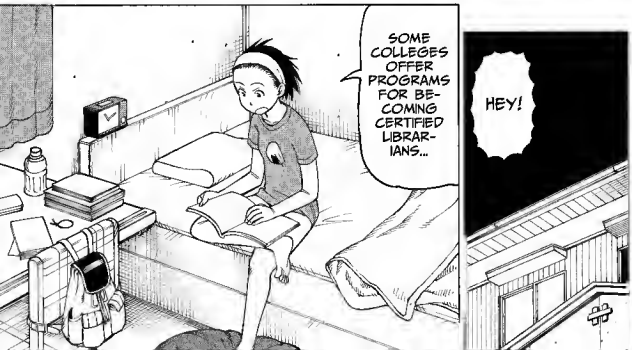
OH, THAT...
OUR LANDLADY DISCOVERED A WAD OF WHITE STRINGS ON THE DIRT IN ONE OF HER POTS.
SHE THOUGHT IT WAS JUST DUST OR GARBAGE, SO SHE STARTED WATERING THE PLANT...
BUT AFTER ANOTHER LOOK...
...SHE NOTICED THAT THE WHITE STRINGS...
...WERE WRIGGLING AROUND.
GAHHH!
SOME-ONE HEARD HER SCREAM, AND CALLED THE POLICE.
...
THAT'S THE LAST STORY YOU SHOULD TELL WHILE I'M EATING NOODLES...
...LIKE NOW...
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED, THEN!


POT, WHITE BUG, WRIGGLING...
HEY! PUT YOUR FEET DOWN!
THE INTERNET'S BETTER FOR THAT KIND OF SEARCH.
YOU COULD RESEARCH THOSE THINGS AT THE LIBRARY!
THERE MIGHT BE A GARDENING SECTION.


OH, THEY'RE JUST WORMS...
THEY HELP ENRICH THE DIRT, BUT THEY CAN MAKE THE DIRT TOO ACIDIC, SO ADD SOME LIME.
I FOUND SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE IT!
POT-WORMS ?!
SUMMON
SALMON


GRR.
THE INTERNET'S TOO HANDY!
WHY ARE YOU SO BIG ON THE LIBRARY?
IT WASN'T SOME WEIRD BUG.
THAT'S GOOD.

BUILDING: ODA DISTRICT...LIBRARY

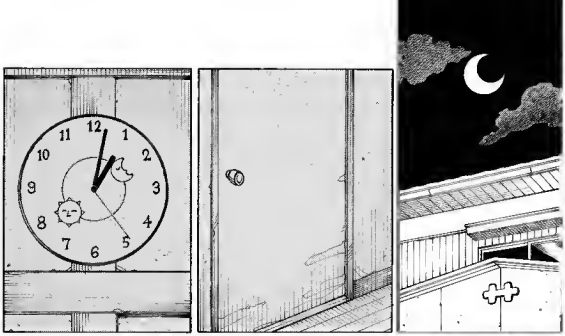


A LIBRARIAN.
A LIBRARIAN DETECTIVE... I LIKE IT.
BA-DUM BA-DUM
ドキ ドキ
YES... AS ALWAYS...
...THE LIBRARY IS FULL OF DISCOVERIES.
SHOULD I GO TO THE LIBRARY BY MYSELF?
BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW IT WORKS...
PACE
PACE

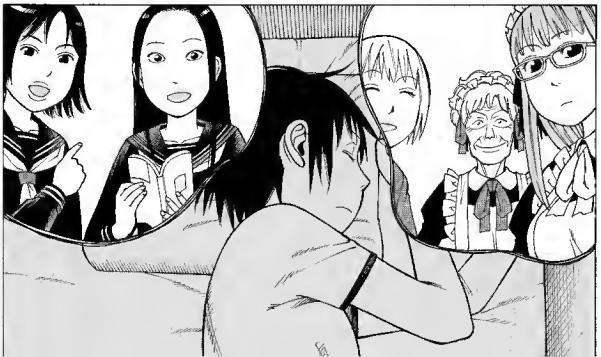
CHAPTER 113 HOTORI SUNK

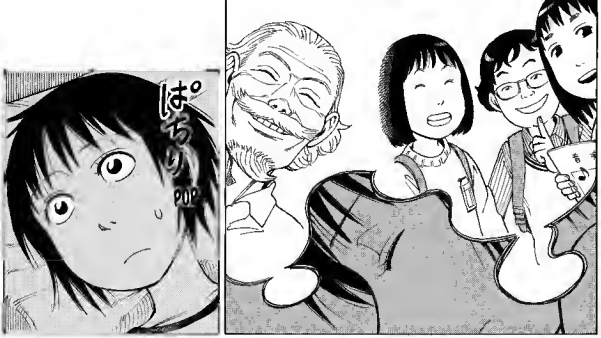
AWNING: RAMEN PARADE

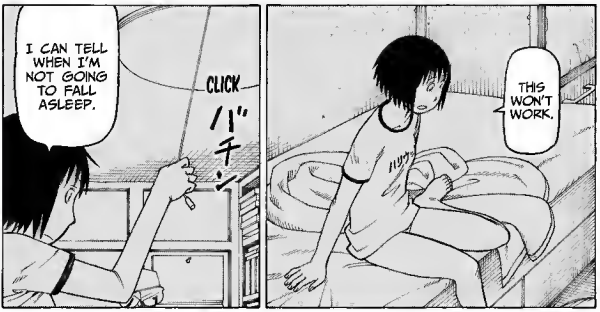
SHIRT: RAMEN PARADE



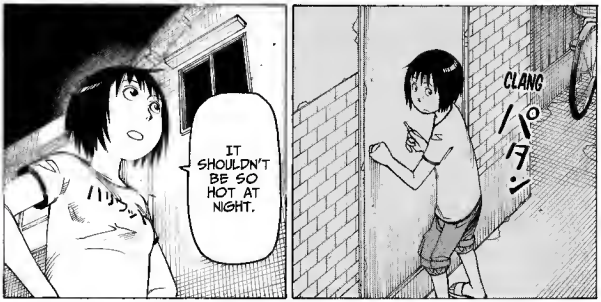
SHIRT: HOLLYWOOD



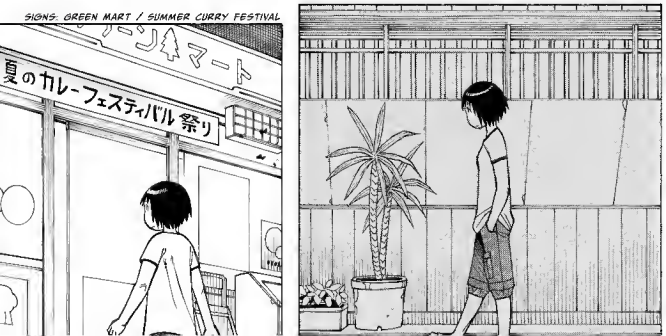

ぱちり
POP


I CAN TELL WHEN I'M NOT GOING TO FALL ASLEEP.
CLICK
パチン
THIS WON'T WORK.
ハリウッド

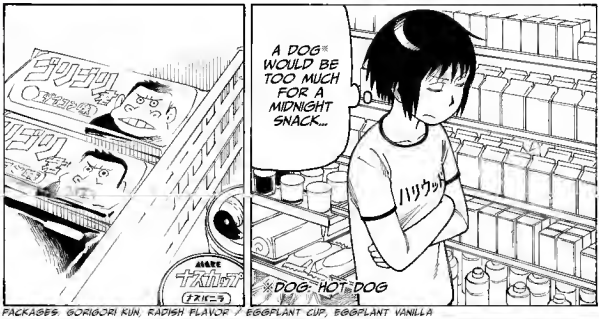
CREAK
ギッ
CREAK
ギシ
FLASH
パッ
TOO BRIGHT...
ハリウッド



SIGNS: GREEN MART / SUMMER CURRY FESTIVAL



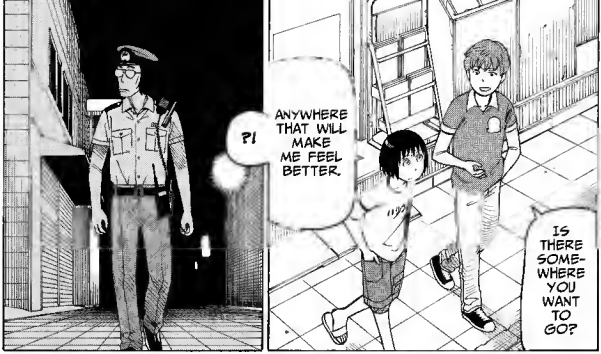
SIGN: FRIED CHICKEN

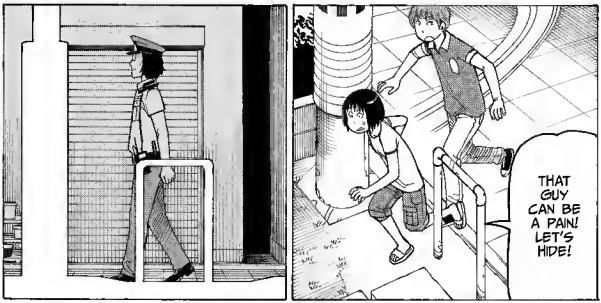


PACKAGES: GORIGORI KUN, RADISH FLAVOR / EGGPLANT CUP, EGGPLANT VANILLA

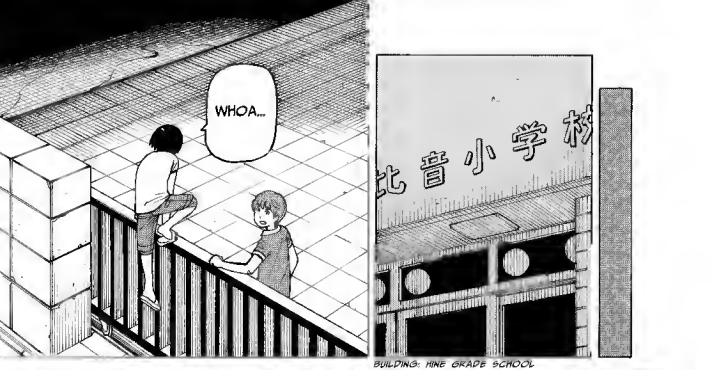
ICE CREAM'S A BETTER IDEA...
AND IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE GOD OF FAT* WILL GO EASY ON ME IF I JUST HAVE SOME ICE CREAM.
*THE GOD WHO DECIDES IF PEOPLE GET FATTER WHEN THEY EAT.
YOU'LL GET FAT.

I DROPPED BY TO READ WEEKLY SHONEN KING.
I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME THING.
WHOA! YOU SCARED ME!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?
HEY, YOU WANNA GO FOR A WALK?
YEAH, I DON'T OFTEN, BUT...
ハリウッド
YOU LOOK LIKE SOMEONE WHO SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE SLEEPING.
I WAS HAVING TROUBLE FALLING ASLEEP...
ハリウッド
...NOBODY BUYS ANYTHING.
AND...
テーン
RATTLE RATTLE
YEP...♡

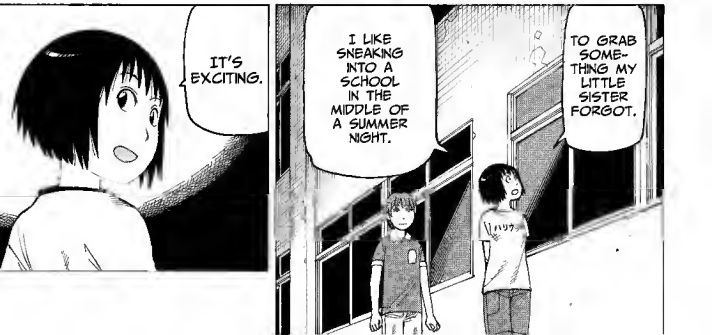

IS THERE SOME-WHERE YOU WANT TO GO?
ANYWHERE THAT WILL MAKE ME FEEL BETTER.
?!

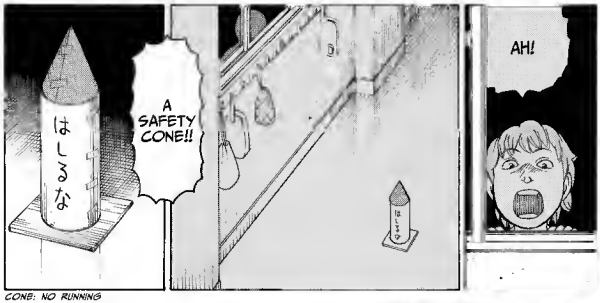

THAT GUY CAN BE A PAIN! LET'S HIDE!

IS HE GONE?
HE'S GONE.
OH, I KNOW!
101



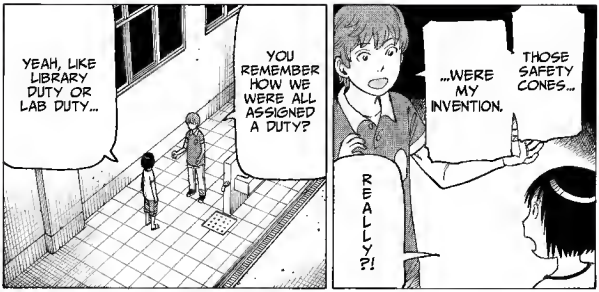
BUILDING: NINE GRADE SCHOOL

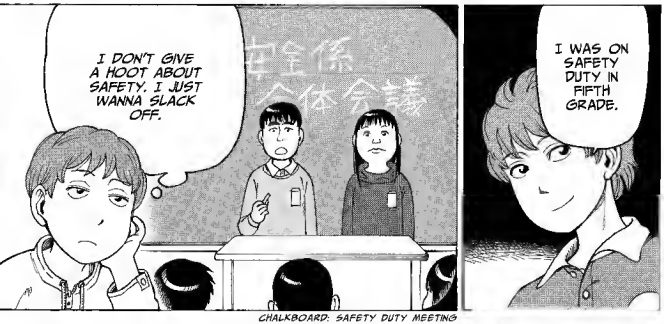




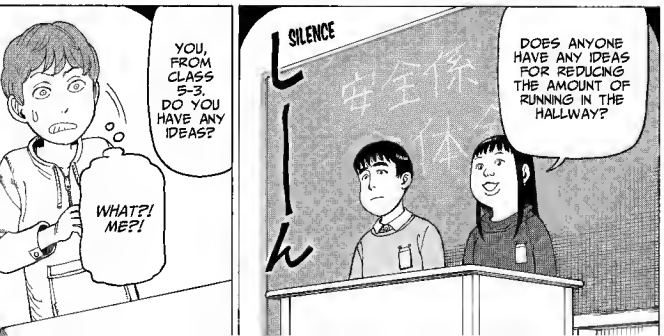
CONE: NO RUNNING

THAT PRACTICE STILL EXISTS!!
YEAH, I REMEMBER A WHOLE BUNCH OF THEM SPACED OUT...
YOU REMEMBER THOSE?! THEY WERE PLACED IN THE HALLWAY!


YEAH, LIKE LIBRARY DUTY OR LAB DUTY...
YOU REMEMBER HOW WE WERE ALL ASSIGNED A DUTY?
REALLY?!
...WERE MY INVENTION.
THOSE SAFETY CONES...

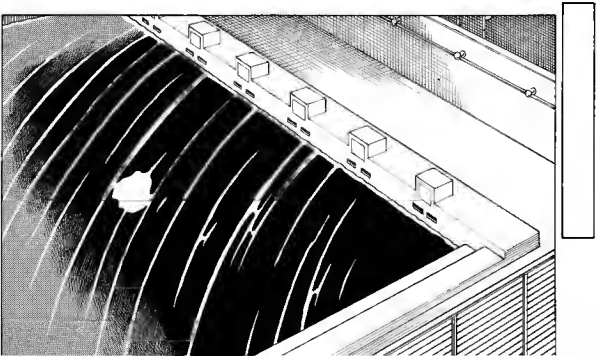


CHALKBOARD: SAFETY DUTY MEETING

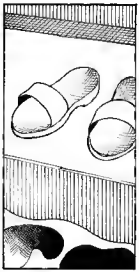

YOU, FROM CLASS 5-3. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS?
WHAT?! ME?!
SILENCE
DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY IDEAS FOR REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF RUNNING IN THE HALLWAY?

UH... YOU COULD PLACE A BUNCH OF BOTTLES WITH WATER INSIDE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HALLWAY.
THEY'D BE IN THE WAY, SO PEOPLE WOULD STOP RUNNING.
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA. BUT BOTTLES WOULD BE DANGEROUS, SO LET'S USE SOMETHING ELSE INSTEAD.

I PULLED THAT IDEA OUT OF NOWHERE...
AFTER THAT, I TURNED TWELVE, THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN...
SEVEN YEARS HAVE PASSED, AND THOSE CONES ARE STILL AROUND!
MAN, I'M SO PUMPED!!
ハリウッド



AHH, THIS FEELS SO GOOD.

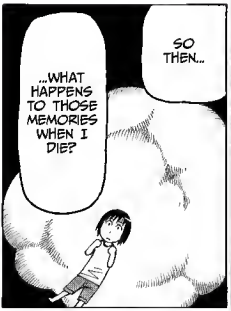


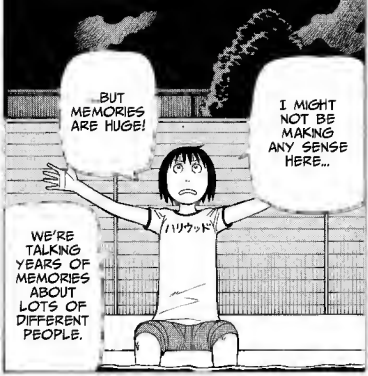
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW, SOMETIMES, YOU START REMEMBERING STUFF THAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST AND THEN YOU CAN'T FALL ASLEEP?

IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
WHY COULDN'T YOU FALL ASLEEP?
6

?

WHEN I REALIZE THAT, I GET SCARED.
A HUMAN IS JUST A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES.


SO THEN...
...WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE MEMORIES WHEN I DIE?


I MIGHT NOT BE MAKING ANY SENSE HERE...
...BUT MEMORIES ARE HUGE!
WE'RE TALKING YEARS OF MEMORIES ABOUT LOTS OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

IT MAKES ME WANT TO STOP MAKING MEMORIES.

DO THEY JUST DISAPPEAR?

WHAT ARE MEMORIES, ANYWAY?

IT'S SCARY WHEN I THINK ABOUT HOW EVERY MOMENT THAT PASSES IS A MOMENT THAT WON'T COME BACK.

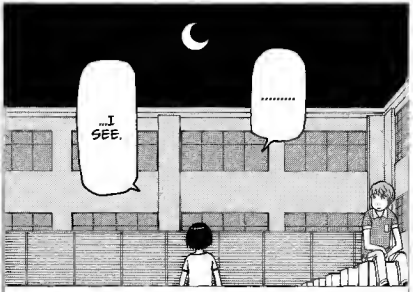
I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...
...BUT ISN'T IT A GOOD THING TO MAKE MORE HAPPY MEMORIES?

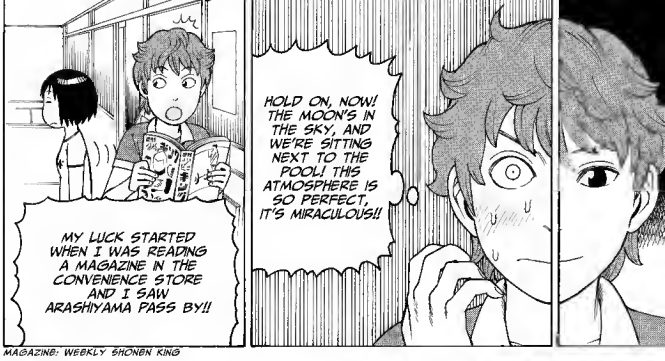
I ALREADY HAVE A FEELING THAT WHEN WE'RE GROWN UP...
...THIS MOMENT WILL JUST BE ANOTHER MEMORY.

SO MEMORIES ARE VERY IMPORTANT.

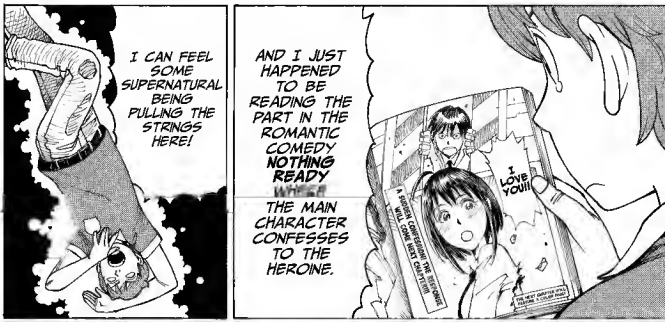
THOSE HAPPY MEMORIES, I THINK...
...ARE WHAT MAKE US GOOD PEOPLE.
AND WHEN GOOD PEOPLE GET TOGETHER, GOOD THINGS HAPPEN.

WELL PUT.


.....
...I SEE.


MY LUCK STARTED WHEN I WAS READING A MAGAZINE IN THE CONVENIENCE STORE AND I SAW ARASHIYAMA PASS BY!!
HOLD ON, NOW! THE MOON'S IN THE SKY, AND WE'RE SITTING NEXT TO THE POOL! THIS ATMOSPHERE IS SO PERFECT, IT'S MIRACULOUS!!

MAGAZINE: WEEKLY SHONEN KING

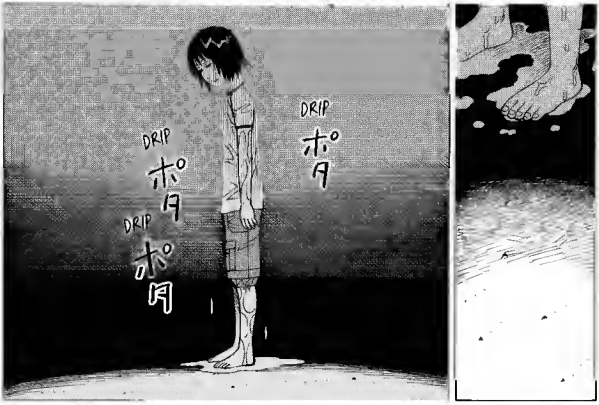

I CAN FEEL SOME SUPERNATURAL BEING PULLING THE STRINGS HERE!
AND I JUST HAPPENED TO BE READING THE PART IN THE ROMANTIC COMEDY NOTHING READY WHERE THE MAIN CHARACTER CONFESSES TO THE HEROINE.
I LOVE YOU!!!
A TOKYO GUIDEBOOK THAT BECOMES WELL-KNOWN AFTER ONE STORY
TELEVISION DRAMA AND MOVIE ADAPTATIONS ARE ALSO HUGE HITS!

UM...
HM?
STAND
すく
6
...AM IN...
I...
I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO TEACH YOU! GO FOR IT!!
CAPTAIN IMAGINARY! WHAT DO YOU THINK?!
GO FOR IT!
DON'T STOP!
DO IT!
...LOVE WITH...

バッシャーン
SPLASH

MAN... WHAT WAS THAT FOR...?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO PUSHED ME IN FIRST...
COME ON.
I DIDN'T PUSH YOU IN. DIDN'T YOU SEE HOW FAR AWAY I WAS?
WHO PUSHED ME IN, THEN?
I DON'T KNOW! YOU PROBABLY SLIPPED AND FELL IN!
OH, MAN, IT'S THE GUARD.
SANADA, STAY HIDDEN!
I HAVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS MIRACULOUS SITUATION!

I-IS SOME-ONE THERE?
HM?


DRIP
ポタ
DRIP
ポタ
DRIP
ポタ

...?!
GAAAA!

YAMA-SAN ISN'T THE KIND OF PERSON WHO WOULD LIE!!
I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!

IN THE HINE GRADE SCHOOL COURT-YARD!

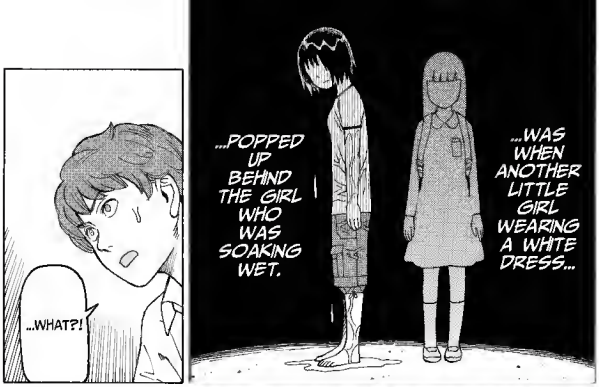
LITTLE GIRL?

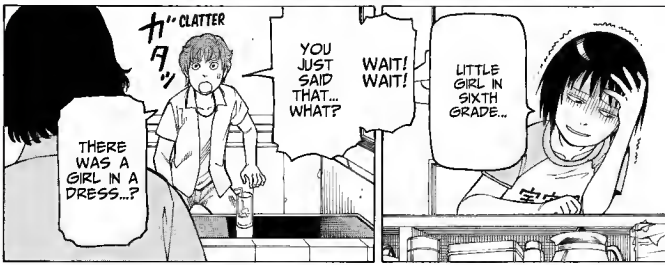
JUDGING FROM HER SIZE, IT WAS PROBABLY THE GHOST OF A LITTLE GIRL IN SIXTH GRADE OR SO...
SHE WAS COM-PLETELY SOAKED...
SNORT
宇宙

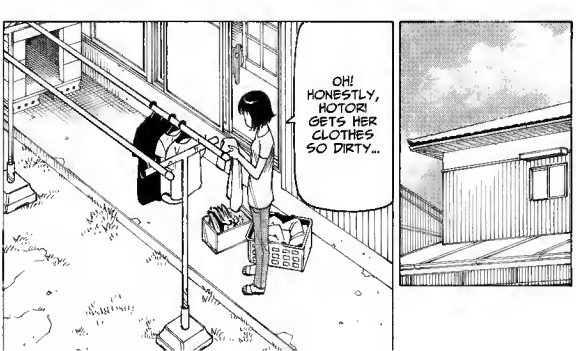
SHIRT: SPACE

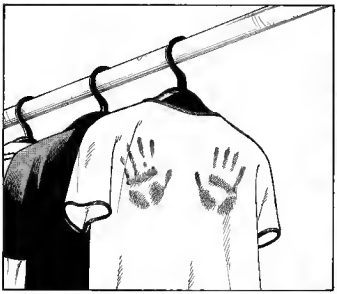
...WHAT REALLY SCARED YAMA-SAN...
ON TOP OF THAT...

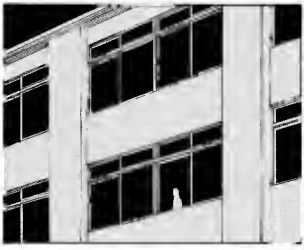
SNORT

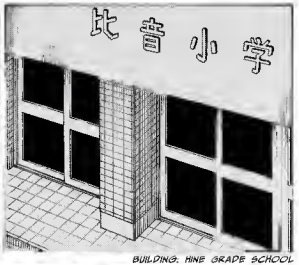

...WHAT?!
...POPPED UP BEHIND THE GIRL WHO WAS SOAKING WET.
...WAS WHEN ANOTHER LITTLE GIRL WEARING A WHITE DRESS...


THERE WAS A GIRL IN A DRESS...?
ガタッ CLATTER
YOU JUST SAID THAT... WHAT?
WAIT! WAIT!
LITTLE GIRL IN SIXTH GRADE...

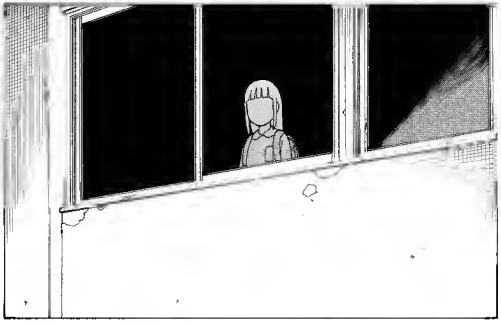

OH! HONESTLY, HOTORI GETS HER CLOTHES SO DIRTY...



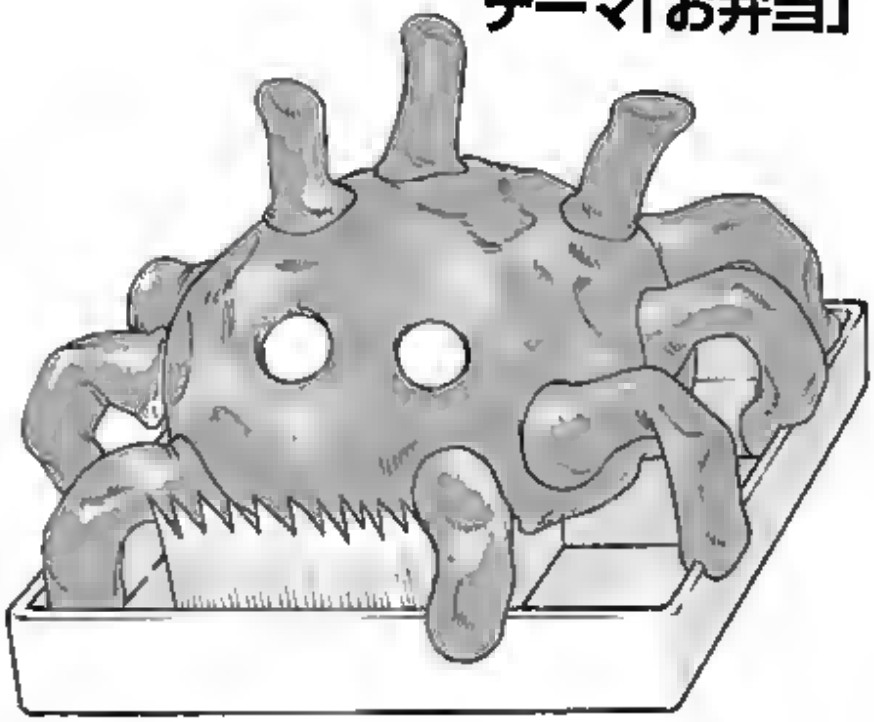




BUILDING: HINE GRADE SCHOOL

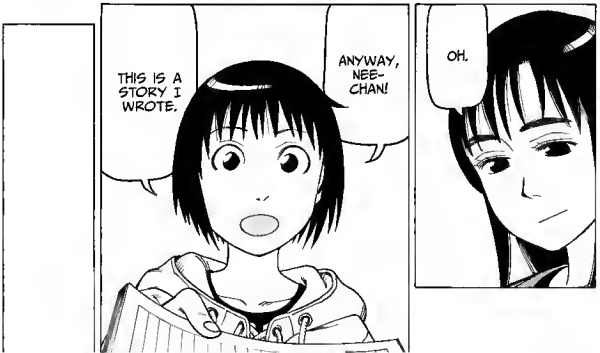


ユキコの工作
テーマ「お弁当」



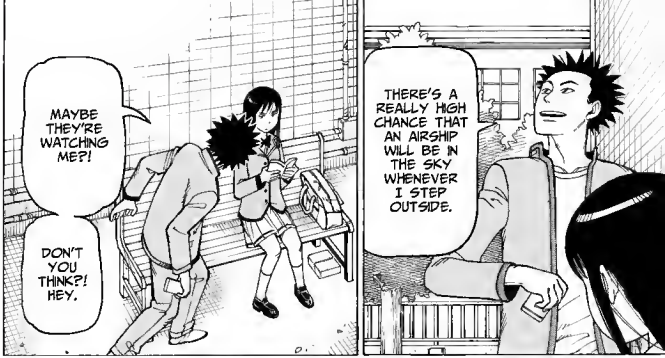
BUILDING: KAMEIDOU ANTIQUES (WE BUY AND SELL)

IT WAS SOMEONE YOU'VE NEVER MET BEFORE, MUROFUSHI RYO.
I DON'T REMEMBER THERE BEING MANY SMOKERS AROUND HERE.
I WOULDN'T KNOW. I DON'T SMOKE.
SMELLS LIKE CROWN MENTHOLS TO ME.



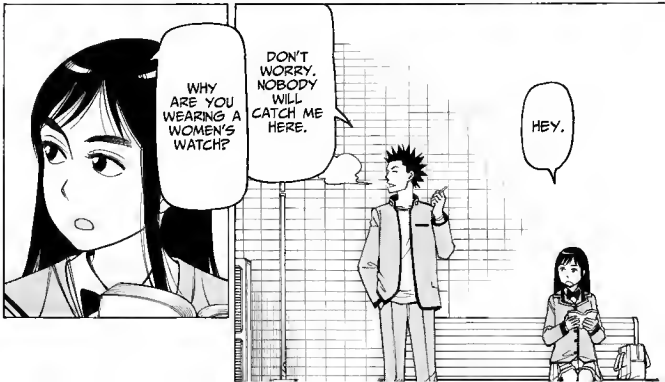
CHAPTER 115
NOVEL BETWEEN DREAM AND REALITY · CONTINUED

HEY! AIRSHIP!


MAYBE THEY'RE WATCHING ME?!
DON'T YOU THINK?! HEY.
THERE'S A REALLY HIGH CHANCE THAT AN AIRSHIP WILL BE IN THE SKY WHENEVER I STEP OUTSIDE.

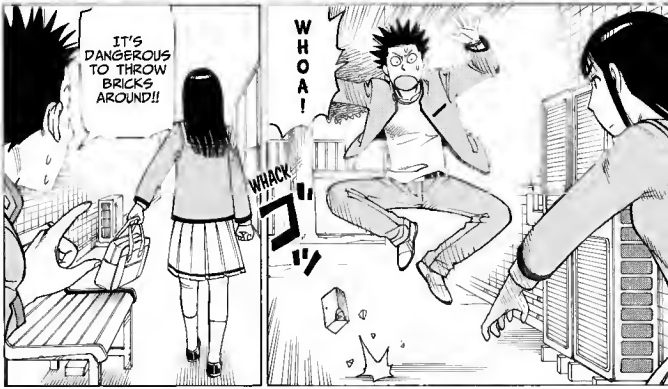
CLICK.
カチッ

NO CLUE...


WHY ARE YOU WEARING A WOMEN'S WATCH?
DON'T WORRY. NOBODY WILL CATCH ME HERE.
HEY.

I WAS JUST CURIOUS.
...I DON'T LIKE BIG WATCHES.
HEY, I'M BORED, SINCE I QUIT MY CLUB. CAN I JOIN THE MYSTERY CLUB?
THAT'S YOUR CONCERN?
SO, I HEAR YOU WRITE NOVELS? LET ME READ ONE.
DO YOU READ MYSTERY BOOKS?
I SURE DO!
YOU DON'T NEED MY PERMISSION. DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
...
NO WAY.

..YOU HAVE BIG BOOBS.


IT'S DANGEROUS TO THROW BRICKS AROUND!!
WHACK
WHOA!

JUST KIDDING!! I WAS JUST KIDDING!
THAT'S A BAD IDEA. YOU'LL NEVER MEET ANYONE THAT WA—
DO YOU HAVE A TENDENCY TO LOOK DOWN ON OTHER PEOPLE?

KNOCKERS
THUD
ドカッ
WHAT WAS HIS NAME AGAIN?
HATE THAT GUY...
THAT'S JUST WRONG! SAKI IS A GIRL'S NAME.
KITA-MURA SAKI?!
THAT'S IT. KITAMURA.
3-3
東絲綱
FOLDER: CLASS DIRECTORY
'KAY...
CAN YOU DROP THESE CARDBOARD BOXES OFF THE NEXT TIME THE RECYCLERS COME BY?
KNOCKERS
SLIDE
ガラ
HEY.

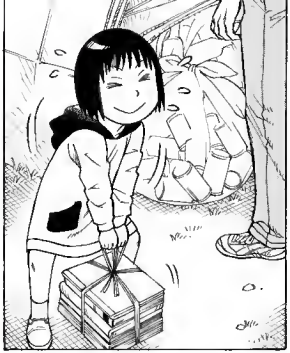
THERE WE GO!

TODAY IS NEIGHBOR-HOOD RECYCLING DAY.
ガルルル
RUMBLE

GRIN
OH, ARE YOU HELPING OUT? YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD GIRL.

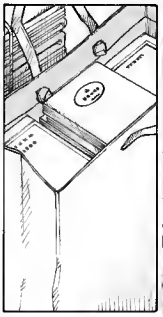
WAVE
WAVE
チョイ
チョイ
HEE HEE.

SUCH A PAIN...



LOOK. SHE'S JUST THE WAY YOU WERE WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE.

WHOA! PILE OF BOOKS!

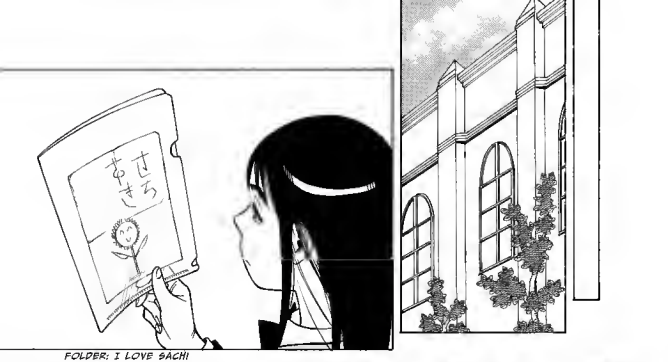


DID I LOOK THIS STUPID WHEN I WAS LITTLE...?

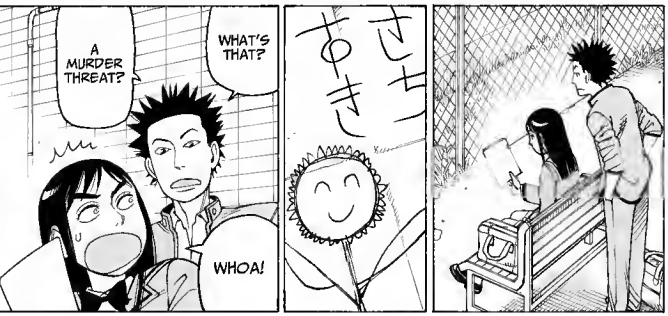
WHAT A HAUL! WHAT A HAUL!
WHAT A WASTE! WHAT A WASTE!

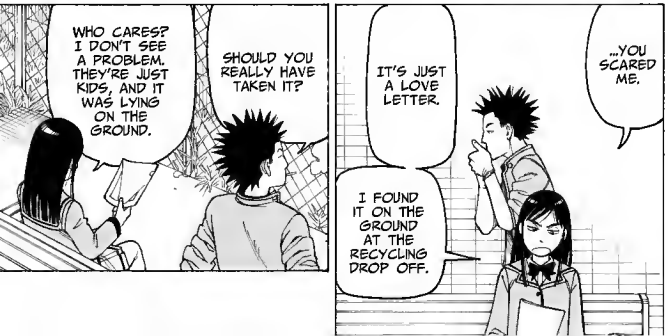
DON'T THROW THOSE AWAY YET!

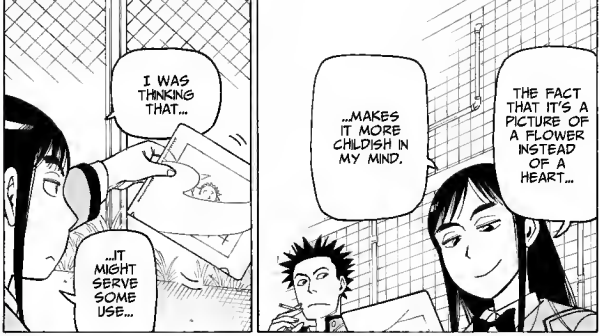
SCATTER
ドサバサ
SCATTER
OOF...
UH OH.
...DROPPED THEM!
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HER THAT TOUCHES PEOPLE'S HEARTS...
HA HA



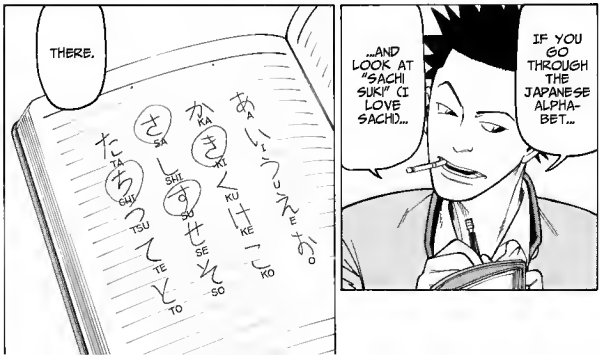
FOLDER: I LOVE SACHI



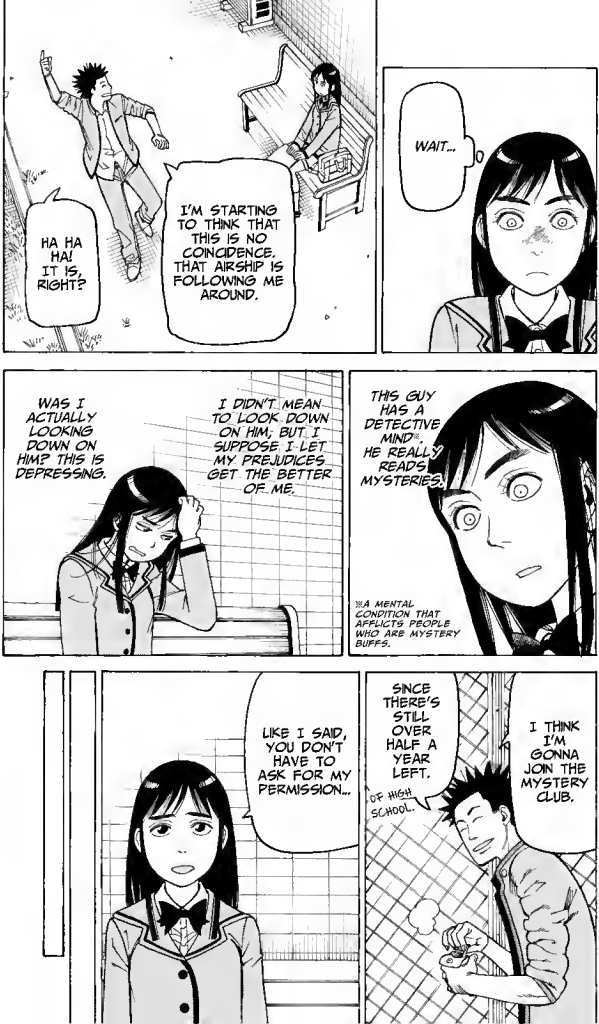

WHO CARES? I DON'T SEE A PROBLEM. THEY'RE JUST KIDS, AND IT WAS LYING ON THE GROUND.
SHOULD YOU REALLY HAVE TAKEN IT?
I FOUND IT ON THE GROUND AT THE RECYCLING DROP OFF.
IT'S JUST A LOVE LETTER.
...YOU SCARED ME.


I WAS THINKING THAT...
...IT MIGHT SERVE SOME USE...
...MAKES IT MORE CHILDISH IN MY MIND.
THE FACT THAT IT'S A PICTURE OF A FLOWER INSTEAD OF A HEART...

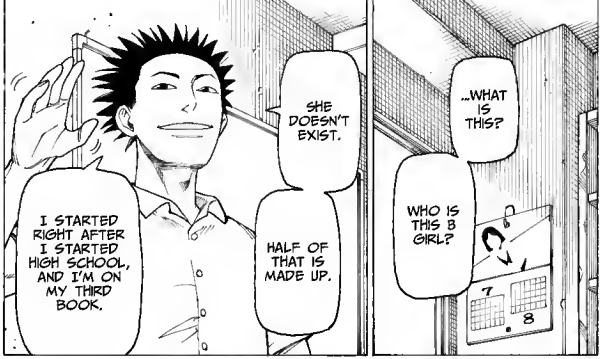
LET ME GET SOME-THING TO WRITE WITH.
WHY DID YOU THINK THIS WAS A MURDER THREAT?
...

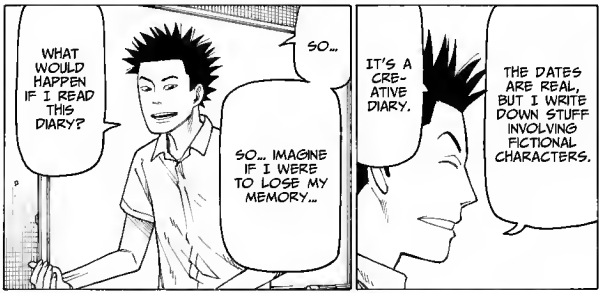

THERE.
あいうえお。
かKA きKI くKU けKE こKO
さSA しSHI すSU せSE そSO
たTA ちCHI つTSU てTE とTO
...AND LOOK AT "SACHI SUKI" (I LOVE SACHI)...
IF YOU GO THROUGH THE JAPANESE ALPHA-BET...

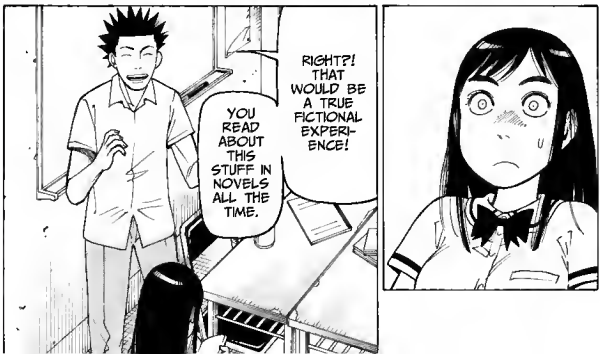
SEE HOW THEY'RE ALL CLOSE TO "SHI"?!
AND SINCE "SHI" CAN MEAN DEATH, IT SAYS THAT DEATH IS CLOSE!
あいうえお
かきくけこ
さしすせそ
たちつてと
!!
HA HA! HILARIOUS, RIGHT?
AND ONCE YOU'VE FIGURED THAT OUT...
...IT STARTS TO LOOK LIKE THE FLOWER IS CARRYING A KNIFE.
WHOA!
ANOTHER AIRSHIP! SEE? MY AIRSHIP ENCOUNTER RATE IS RIDICULOUS!


HA HA HA! IT IS, RIGHT?
I'M STARTING TO THINK THAT THIS IS NO COINCIDENCE. THAT AIRSHIP IS FOLLOWING ME AROUND.
WAIT...
WAS I ACTUALLY LOOKING DOWN ON HIM? THIS IS DEPRESSING.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO LOOK DOWN ON HIM; BUT, I SUPPOSE I LET MY PREJUDICES GET THE BETTER OF ME.
THIS GUY HAS A DETECTIVE MIND*. HE REALLY READS MYSTERIES.
*A MENTAL CONDITION THAT AFFLICTS PEOPLE WHO ARE MYSTERY BUFFS.
LIKE I SAID, YOU DON'T HAVE TO ASK FOR MY PERMISSION...
SINCE THERE'S STILL OVER HALF A YEAR LEFT.
OF HIGH SCHOOL.
I THINK I'M GONNA JOIN THE MYSTERY CLUB.

I GUESS IT'S FINALLY TIME TO SHOW YOU THIS.
IT SHOULD BE ABOUT CREATING A FICTIONAL EXPERIENCE.
MYSTERY IS NOT JUST ABOUT WRITING A STORY FOR AN AUDIENCE.
SIGN: MYSTERY CLUB
DECEMBER
2 MON Morning: B made me eggs and toast, Lun
Brought out the kotatsu
Night: B made Mapo Tofu
3 TUE Walked to school with B. Lunch: Cafeteria
Night: B is late. Buy dinner at a convenience store
4 WED It rained hard. Got in a fight with B aft
saying her makeup looked weird
On the way home from school, I stoppe
5 THU Lunch: Sandwich
Night: Went to a soba place with B
and had ten zaru.
We walked around for an hour
afterwards
A DIARY?
"MAY 15: THERE WERE TWO PHONE CALLS WHERE NOBODY SPOKE. I THOUGHT I COULD HEAR WAVES."
"MAY 16: B TOOK THE DAY OFF FROM WORK. SHE'S BEEN ACTING STRANGELY SINCE I MENTIONED THE PHONE CALLS."

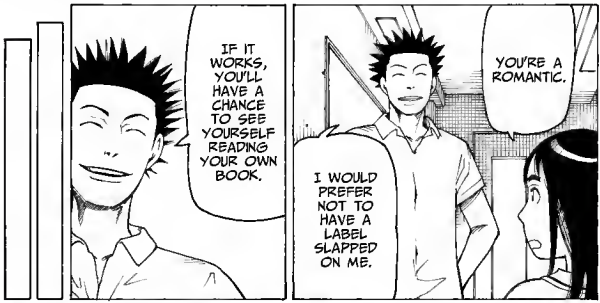

I STARTED RIGHT AFTER I STARTED HIGH SCHOOL, AND I'M ON MY THIRD BOOK.
HALF OF THAT IS MADE UP.
SHE DOESN'T EXIST.
...WHAT IS THIS?
WHO IS THIS B GIRL?
7
8


WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I READ THIS DIARY?
SO...
SO... IMAGINE IF I WERE TO LOSE MY MEMORY...
IT'S A CREATIVE DIARY.
THE DATES ARE REAL, BUT I WRITE DOWN STUFF INVOLVING FICTIONAL CHARACTERS.


YOU READ ABOUT THIS STUFF IN NOVELS ALL THE TIME.
RIGHT?! THAT WOULD BE A TRUE FICTIONAL EXPERIENCE!

IF POSSIBLE, I WOULD LOVE TO BE ABLE TO READ A NOVEL I WROTE...
...WITHOUT ANY MEMORY OF WRITING IT...
YOU HAVE HAIR LIKE A SEA URCHIN, BUT YOU SAY INTERESTING THINGS.
WHAT DOES MY HAIR HAVE TO DO WITH ANY-THING?
WAIT, THAT'S NOT RIGHT...
...ER...?
I WANT TO READ A NOVEL I WROTE...
...WITHOUT KNOWING THAT I WROTE IT.
AND THEN I CAN GET AN HONEST OPINION.
THIS IS STRETCHING IT PRETTY FAR...
HMM...
YOU KNOW ALL THOSE SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT IDEAS OR STUPID STUFF THAT YOU NORMALLY WOULDN'T DO?
I'VE BEEN DOING ALL OF THOSE THINGS.
THROUGH MY FAKE DIARY.

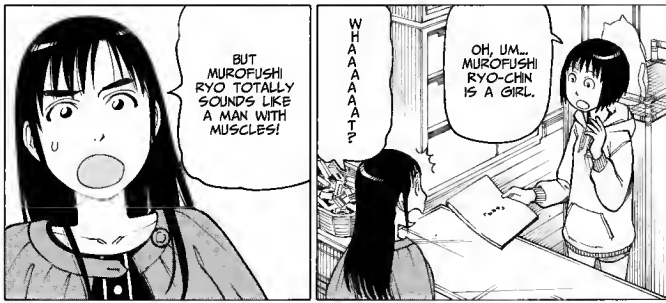
IF YOU STICK TO IT, YOU'LL HAVE A CHANCE AT A FICTIONAL EXPERIENCE.
OR YOU'LL BE A LOT CLOSER, AT LEAST.
AND WHEN SOMETHING INTERESTING HAPPENS AROUND YOU, DASH TO IT.


YOU'RE A ROMANTIC.
I WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE A LABEL SLAPPED ON ME.
IF IT WORKS, YOU'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE YOURSELF READING YOUR OWN BOOK.

SEE MYSELF READING MY OWN BOOK.
WATCH WITH MY VERY OWN EYES AS I CALMLY READ A BOOK THAT I WROTE...

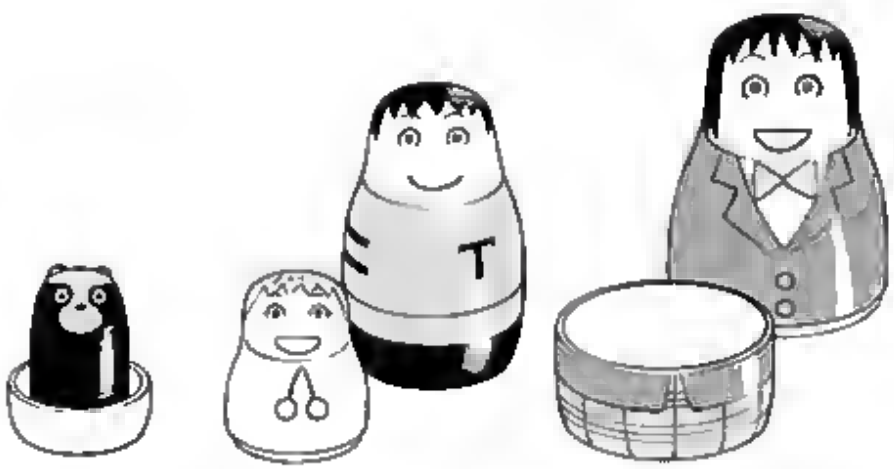
DO I LOOK FOR A FRIEND WHO ALSO ENJOYS READING NOVELS?
A STRANGER LIKE ME. ME LIKE A STRANGER. WHAT WOULD I BE ABLE TO WRITE IF I COULD ALTER MY PERSPECTIVE?
BUT THAT'D TAKE FOREVER.
IF I HAD A CHILD, I COULD RAISE THEM READING THE BOOKS I LIKE...
NO, I NEED SOMEONE WHO'S SIMILAR AT THE CORE.
BA-DUMP
ドキ

...PICK THE SAME CIGARETTES AS YOUR BOYFRIEND.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO...
亀井堂


BUT MUROFUSHI RYO TOTALLY SOUNDS LIKE A MAN WITH MUSCLES!
WHAAAAAAT?
OH, UM... MUROFUSHI RYO-CHIN IS A GIRL.
....

GAH.
MAN...
...YOU'RE A FAILURE AS A DETECTIVE.
IF YOU USE A PERSON'S NAME TO ASSUME THEIR GENDER...
GOOD GRIEF, NEE-CHAN.

I CAN'T TELL IF THIS IS INTERESTING OR NOT ANYMORE...
ESPECIALLY THE ENDING.
OH, I DID A LOT OF THINKING WHEN I WROTE THIS, AND I THINK I DID TOO MUCH THINKING.
SO?
WHAT'D YOU WRITE?
WE'RE NOT THAT SIMILAR.
WE'RE PRETTY SIMILAR PEOPLE, SO I FIGURED YOU COULD GIVE ME A SOLID OPINION.
I GUESS I'LL READ WHAT YOU'VE GOT.
BUT OKAY.
アンティーク 買入れ 売出し 亀井堂



ホトリョーシカ

SHIRT: HOLLYWOOD

CHAPTER 116 DOPPELGANGER

IT GETS DARK SO EARLY NOW.
LET'S GRAB SOME TAKOYAKI OR TAIYAKI.
RUSTLE
ガヤ
RUSTLE
ガヤ
MAN, I WANNA GO HOME...
DING
キーン
DONG
コーン

UGH.

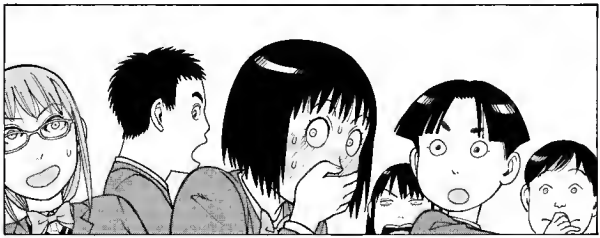
I'D SAY FUKUZAWA-SAN RANKS AS AN "ARASHI-YAMA CATEGORY 3."
SHE'S TOO MUCH TO HANDLE, EVEN FOR YOU.
...DID I DO SOMETHING TO MAKE HER MAD...?
IT'S FUKUZAWA. IS SHE WAITING FOR YOU?
...WITH HER ARMS CROSSED?

I BET THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT HOW CHEERFUL SHE IS.
NOT QUITE. THE CORRECT ANSWER IS HOW NOISY SHE IS.
WHAT ARE YOU RANK-ING?!
YOU'D RANK HER THAT HIGH?
NO, I'D CALL HER AN "ARASHI-YAMA CATEGO-RY 4."

...SOME-ONE NAMED ARASHIYA-MA-SAN?
I'M LOOKING FOR...
EXCUSE ME.

WE'RE HOPING THAT ARASHIYAMA-SAN CAN WRITE A SCRIPT FOR US...
OH... WELL, WE'RE SECOND-YEARS FROM THE MUSICAL CLUB.
OH? YOU CAN TALK TO ME IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ARASHIYAMA-SAN.
I'M LIKE HER AS-SISTANT.

DEAD BODY!
OVER MY RED BODY!
WAIT! CAN'T YOU LET US TALK TO HER FOR A MOMENT—
OH, I HAVE BUSINESS WITH HER TODAY, SO COME BACK SOME OTHER TIME. I'LL LET HER KNOW.

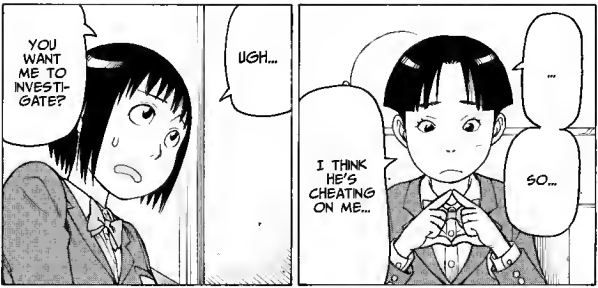


SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE

YOU'RE ONE TO TALK!!
SHE NEEDS TO LEARN TO KEEP HER MOUTH SHUT!
HA HA HA
THEY'LL BE TALKING ABOUT THAT AT CLASS REUNIONS.
COFFEE
シーサイド

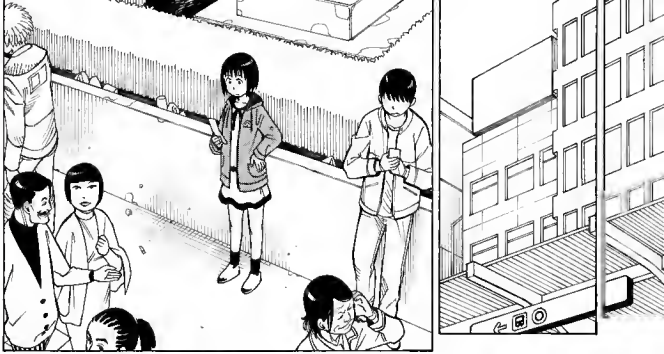
HI THERE!
HERE COME THE NOISE-MAKERS.
WHAT'S WRONG, HOTORI-CHAN?
SHE SAID SOMETHING SCANDALOUS IN FRONT OF A CROWD.
APRON: ARA! CLEANING
WHAT DID SHE SAY?
UM...
I'LL LEAVE IT UP TO YOUR IMAGINA-TION.
!
WAIT, WHAT'D SHE SAY? I WANNA HEAR [redacted]-SAN SAY SCANDALOUS THINGS.
荒井クリーニング
WELL? WHAT WAS IT?
WHAT WAS IT?
HMM?!
WHACK
オボン
OWIE!!
荒井クリーニング

STOP! I'M SORRY!!
OKAY, GOT IT!
PLEASE ARREST THIS MAN FOR SEXUAL HARASS-MENT.
RATTLE
RATTLE-カラン
カラン
OKAY, NOW WE CAN ACTUALLY TALK, HOTORI-SAN.
SO HE HAS...
HE'S FINALLY BEEN ARRESTED...
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TOLD ME THAT HE BOXES!
YOUR POWERS OF DEDUCTION ARE MIND-BOGGLING!
WHOA!!
OH, THE ONE WHO BOXES?
I'M LOOKING FOR SOME ADVICE REGARDING MY BOYFRIEND.

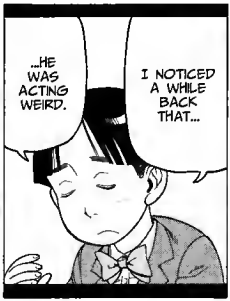

...
SO...
I THINK HE'S CHEATING ON ME...
UGH...
YOU WANT ME TO INVESTI-GATE?

I REALLY DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THAT KIND OF STUFF.
PLEASE HEAR ME OUT!
I'LL EXPLAIN THIS IN A WAY THAT WILL MAKE YOU INTEREST-ED.

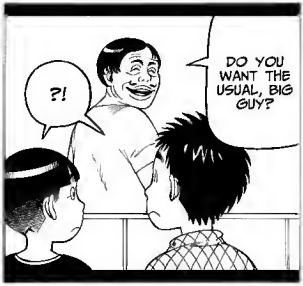
FOR EXAMPLE, MY BOY-FRIEND IS...
...A JEWEL SMUGGLER... NO, A THIEF! HE WORKS FOR A SUPER THIEF!
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT.
I'M LISTENING, SO STOP MAKING STUFF UP.



FOR ONE THING...
...WHEN WE ENTERED A RESTAURANT FOR THE FIRST TIME...


I NOTICED A WHILE BACK THAT...
...HE WAS ACTING WEIRD.

I STAYED IN BED ALL DAY YESTERDAY BECAUSE I WASN'T FEELING WELL.

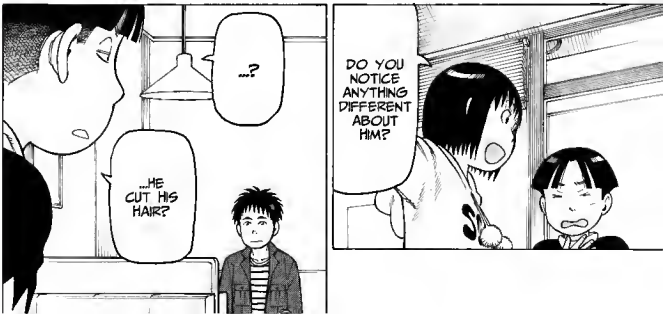

AND THEN...
?!
DO YOU WANT THE USUAL, BIG GUY?

AND THEN, I'VE BEEN RECEIVING REPORTS THE PAST MONTH.
I SAW YOUR BOYFRIEND BY THE TRAIN STATION YESTERDAY.
WITH A BUNCH OF GUYS.
I EVEN SAID HELLO.
YOUR BOYFRIEND WAS ON A DATE WITH ONE OF THOSE HELEN※ GIRLS.
※ST. HELEN'S ACADEMY.
HE'S CHEATING ON YOU!!
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE HER SAD.
FUKUZAWA-SAN REMINDS ME OF MY SISTER YUKIKO SOMEHOW...
WELL, A DETECTIVE SHOULDN'T JUDGE PEOPLE BY THEIR APPEARANCE.
HMM, HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE KIND OF GUY WHO WOULD CHEAT.

OH, THAT GIRL HAS A HELEN UNI-FORM.
SHE'S WALKING THIS WAY.
SO ACCORDING TO FUKUZAWA-SAN, PEOPLE SAW HER BOYFRIEND ON A DATE BY THIS STATION.
THERE HE IS!!
CHOKE
AND HE'S WITH A HELEN GIRL, JUST LIKE THEY SAID...
YEAH, THAT'S DEFI-NITELY FUKU-ZAWA-SAN'S BOY-FRIEND.

IT APPEARS THAT HIS WRONG-DOINGS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED.
PUNCH HIM HARD AND BREAK UP WITH HIM.
YOU SAW HIM YES-TERDAY AFTER-NOON?!
THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE!!
I KNOW IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT I SAW HIM WITH MY OWN EYES-
BUT HE WAS WITH ME YESTER-DAY.
HUH?!
YOU DON'T WEAR A WIG AND A HELEN UNIFORM WHEN YOU GO ON DATES, DO YOU...?
OR DOES HE HAVE A TWIN BROTH-ER?
NOPE, NOPE.
...?
THERE MUST BE SOME KIND OF TRICK INVOLVED HERE.

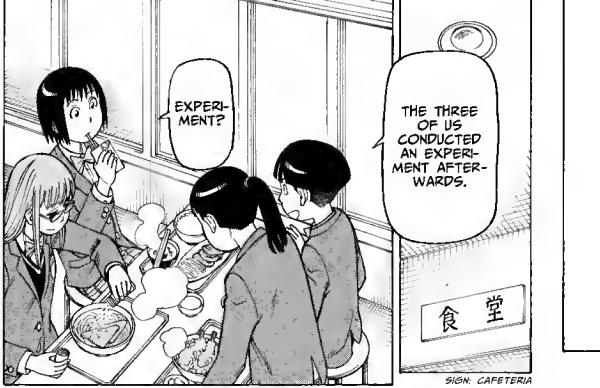
SIGN: CAFE SEASIDE



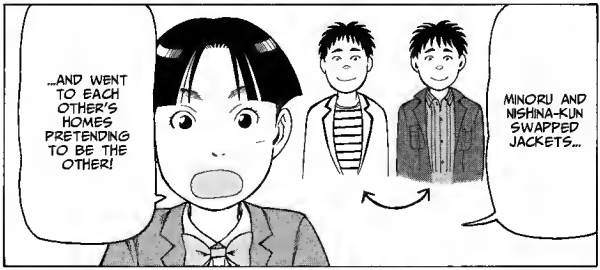
HUH?!
CLICK
ガチャ
TOILET
OKAY! COME ON OUT!
パン
パン
CLAP
CLAP
TOILET
WAIT... THIS ONE IS MINORU...
TOIL
THUD
バタン
THE TRUTH IS VERY SIMPLE.
THERE WAS NO TRICK INVOLVED AT ALL.
SO WHO'S SITTING OVER THERE?!

HI. I'M NISHINA.
THIS PERSON MET HIS GIRLFRIEND FROM ST. HELEN'S ONE MONTH AGO.
THAT'S IT?!
YOUR BOYFRIEND HAS SOMEONE WHO LOOKS SO SIMILAR THAT YOU, HIS GIRLFRIEND, CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE.
AND YOUR FACE CHANGES FROM DAY TO DAY BECAUSE OF ALL THE SWELLING FROM BOXING.
BUT IT'S NOT JUST YOUR FACE. YOUR DEMEANOR AND FASHION SENSE ARE ALSO SIMILAR.
YEAH, WHEN YOU STAND NEXT TO EACH OTHER, I CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE...
I WENT BACK TO THE STATION AND TALKED TO HIM TO CONFIRM THAT HE WASN'T YOUR BOYFRIEND. THAT'S IT.
THERE WAS NO DEDUCTION NEEDED.
STOP IT!! YOU'RE MAKING IT HARDER ON ME!!
OH, THIS GIRL IS THE GENIUS DETECTIVE I MENTIONED WHO WOULD SHAME HOLMES.
SO WHAT KIND OF DEDUCTION DID YOU USE TO FIGURE THIS OUT?!

WHEN TWO PEOPLE LOOK SO SIMILAR, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE MISTAKEN SIGHTINGS.
WE'VE GOTTEN IN FIGHTS BECAUSE OF THAT.
WE HAD A REALLY BIG ONE...
I ALWAYS WONDERED WHY STRANGERS WOULD COME UP AND SAY HI TO ME...
YOU ALMOST HAVE TO WONDER IF WE'RE BROTHERS SEPARATED AT BIRTH.
MAYBE THERE'S SOME SECRET WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT.
WHY DON'T YOU ASK YOUR PAR-ENTS?
NO, IT'D BE FASTER TO LOOK UP OUR BIRTH RECORDS.
THERE ARE STORIES ABOUT DOP-PELGANGERS WHO HAVE THE EXACT SAME FACE AS YOU...
...AND THAT YOU'LL DIE IF YOU RUN INTO THEM.
BUT I'M THINKING THAT IT'S JUST A WARNING TO STAY AWAY FROM PEOPLE WHO LOOK LIKE YOU...
...TO AVOID ANY CONFUSION OR TROUBLE.



SIGN: CAFETERIA



THAT'S CRAZY!!
HUH?
DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED?
OF COURSE I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.
DEPENDING ON THE RESULT, I CAN WRITE A NOVEL ABOUT IT.

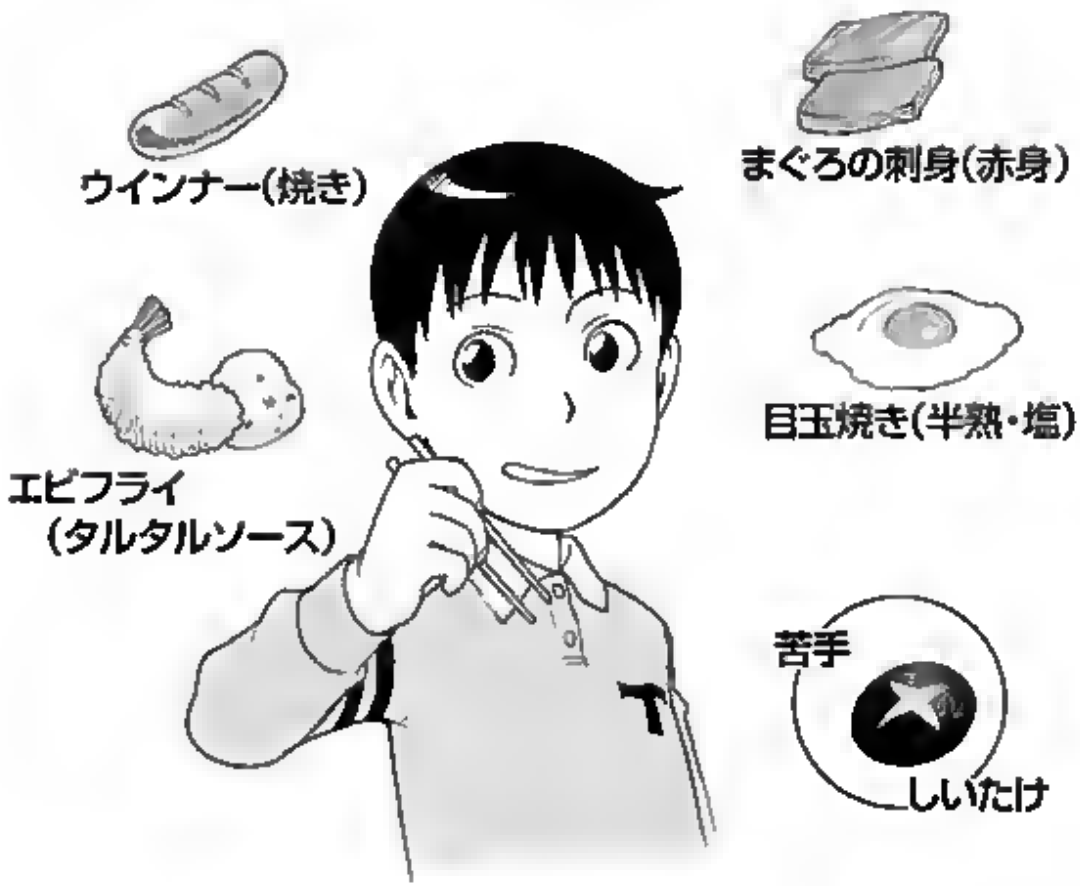
I-I'M HOME...
HMM? ARE YOU MINORU'S FRIEND?
SORRY, HE'S NOT HOME YET.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO WAIT FOR HIM INSIDE?
NO, I'LL COME BACK!
DING DONG
YES?
OH, IT'S ME.
OH? WHO ARE YOU?

HOLD ON.
SORRY, I HAVE THE WRONG ROOM.
UH, WELL...
MY SON HAS THE EXACT SAME CLOTHES.
OH, FANCY THAT...
THEIR MOTHERS DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE HOW SIMILAR THE IMPOSTERS LOOKED TO THEIR OWN SONS.
OH!
THE CONCLUSION IS THAT PARENTS ARE AMAZING.
YEP.
THAT'S IT?!

AND YOU KNOW WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT DOPPEL-GANGERS?
I'M THINKING THAT IT'S JUST GOD BEING LAZY.
HMM?
OH?
THEY SAY THAT THERE ARE SEVEN PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO LOOK LIKE YOU.
NORMALLY, THEY'RE SCATTERED AROUND THE WORLD...
...SO THEY DON'T MEET ONE ANOTHER.
IF GOD ISN'T CAREFUL WHEN PLACING PEOPLE, THEY'LL MEET.
SO GOD'S RE-SPONSE IS...
OOPS! PRETEND THAT NEVER HAPPENED.
...TO JUST GET RID OF THEM?!

I HAVE THREE FRIENDS WHO WERE BORN ON JANUARY FIRST...
THAT'S PRETTY INCREDIBLE.
WHEN THAT HAPPENS, I HAVE TO WONDER IF GOD WAS LAZY WHEN HE PUT ME ON THIS EARTH.
THAT'S AN INTERESTING WAY TO LOOK AT IT.
HEH HEH.
FUKUZAWA-SAN, YOU JUST REPEATED WHAT TATSUNO-SAN TOLD US BACK IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.
OOPSIE! REALLY?!
SHE GOT CAUGHT FAST.

タケルの好物


ウインナー(焼き)
まぐろの刺身(赤身)
目玉焼き(半熟・塩)
エビフライ
(タルタルソース)
苦手
しいたけ

お?お?「エビ」が
入ってるのはアレか!?
・・・
のろけか!?
違うよ!!
うるさいな

おまけ
紺先輩の悪魔的思考

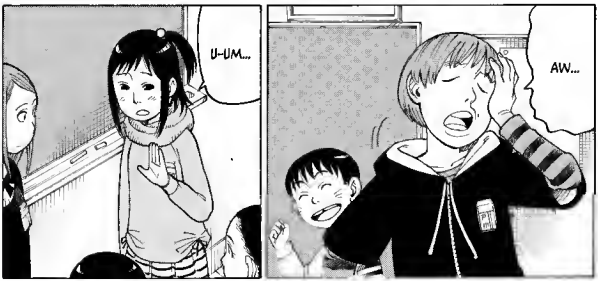
I CAN'T FIND IT ANY-WHERE!
BUILDING: NINE GRADE SCHOOL, ENTRANCE / SIGN: CLASS 5-3
DID YOU FIND A GOR-GON'S LABY-RINTH?
5年3組

.....
.....
WE'VE LOOKED EVERY-WHERE, BUT...

...TO ASSIGN CLASS DUTIES.
NOW, WE'LL USE THIS HOME-ROOM PERIOD...
THE BELL'S ALREADY RUNG.
COME NOW.
SLIDE
ガラッ

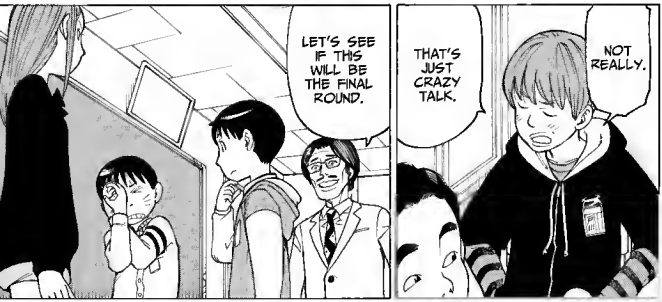
Class Representatives (2)
Event Monitors (4)
OKAY, WE NEED TWO SAFETY MONITORS.
WHO WANTS TO DO IT?
ME!
THIS SOUNDS EASY.
ALL RIGHT, STEP FORWARD AND WE'LL USE ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS TO DECIDE.
SIX OF YOU...

AGAIN!
ONCE AGAIN!
ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS!
AGAIN!


U-UM...
AW...

COUNT ME OUT, TOO...
COUNT ME OUT.
UH...

NATURAL FERMENT
HEAR THAT?
PIPE DOWN!
:WHIS-TLE:
WHAT? YOU JUST WANTED TO BE WITH TOGAWA?!


LET'S SEE IF THIS WILL BE THE FINAL ROUND.
THAT'S JUST CRAZY TALK.
NOT REALLY.

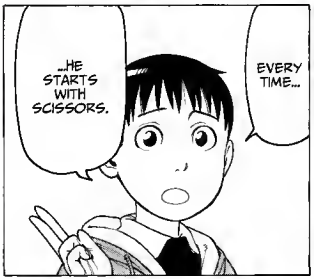
YES!
ROCK, PAPER, SCIS-SORS!

I GOT PARTNERED WITH MAKKI LAST YEAR, SO I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HELP EBI-CHAN WIN...
I DON'T MIND BEING PAIRED WITH EITHER MAKKI OR EBI-CHAN.
THIS IS DRAGGING ON. ONE MORE ROUND!
カッ
CLICK
ギュ
SQUEEZE
SLIP
ROCK...
PAPER...

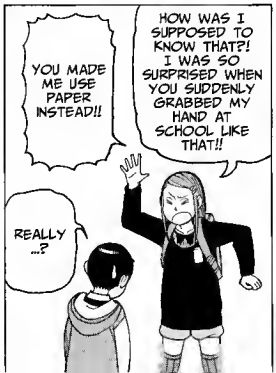
GOOD-BYE!
キーンコーン
カーンコーン
DING DONG
AIHARA-SAN, COME WITH ME!
AI-HARA-SAN, UM...
DO YOU LIKE TOGAWA-KUN?
HUH?!
BACK WHEN OUR CLASS WAS ASSIGNING DUTIES...
OH, YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG.
I RAISED MY HAND BECAUSE I WANTED TO BE PARTNERED WITH EBI-CHAN.
BUT EBI-CHAN, YOU KNOW, PROBABLY WANTS TO BE PARTNERED WITH ARASHIYAMA-KUN, SO I BACKED OUT.
OH, I SEE. THAT'S RIGHT.
SORRY. SORRY ABOUT THIS.
IT'S OKAY.

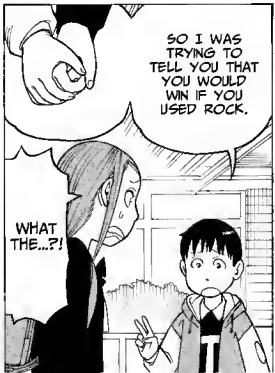
YOU MADE ME LOSE!

WHY DID YOU SUDDENLY SQUEEZE MY HAND?!


..HE STARTS WITH SCISSORS.
EVERY TIME...

MAKKI HAS A HABIT WHEN HE PLAYS.
HE DOESN'T EVEN REALIZE IT.
YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG. SEE...


YOU MADE ME USE PAPER INSTEAD!!
HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW THAT?! I WAS SO SURPRISED WHEN YOU SUDDENLY GRABBED MY HAND AT SCHOOL LIKE THAT!!
REALLY ...?


SO I WAS TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT YOU WOULD WIN IF YOU USED ROCK.
WHAT THE...?!

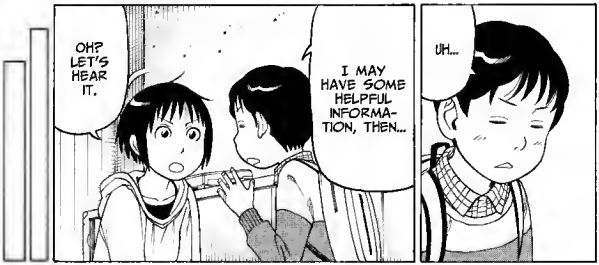
HEY...
HMM?
LET'S GO LOOK FOR A GORGON'S LABYRINTH.
I'VE ALREADY GIVEN UP.
DON'T GIVE UP! I HEARD THAT SOMEONE IN CLASS 4 BOUGHT ONE!
THERE MUST BE ONE AROUND SOME-WHERE!
ARE THEY IN SEARCH OF SOME NEW POPULAR ITEM?
HMM...
I GUESS WE CAN GO LOOK AROUND...
YEAH!

KNOCK
コンコン
KNOCK
HELLO!
OH.
SLIDE
ガラ
YOU'RE TAKERU'S FRIEND.
HELLO.
HE RAN OFF WITH MAKKI AROUND TEN MINUTES AGO...
THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A LABYRINTH OF SOME KIND.
I WAS ALSO GOING TO LOOK FOR THAT WITH ARASHIYAMA-KUN...
WHAT IS IT? SOME NEW FAD?
BOX: GORGON'S LABYRINTH / GUM
HERE.
OH...

AHA.
IT'S A TOY THAT COMES WITH SNACKS.
IT'S NOT SOLD ANY-WHERE RIGHT NOW.
I DON'T UNDER-STAND WHY THIS IS SO POPULAR.
I'M GUESSING THEY DIDN'T MAKE ENOUGH.
IN A FEW MONTHS, THE SUPPLY SHOULD CATCH UP TO THE DEMAND...
...BUT GRADE SCHOOL KIDS CAN'T WAIT THAT LONG.
UM, SORRY. WHAT'S YOUR NAME AGAIN? I'LL LET TAKERU KNOW THAT YOU DROPPED BY.
YAMA-MOTO.
OH! YOU'RE YAMA-MOTO-KUN!
I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU.
YOU'RE GOOD AT CARD GAMES, AND YOU'RE A GOOD ARTIST.
IS THAT WHAT HE SAID...?
THANK YOU FOR BEING HIS FRIEND.

ARASHI-YAMA-KUN SAID THAT...
...HIS SISTER IS VERY SMART.
WHAT?!
TAKERU'S BEEN SAYING NICE THINGS ABOUT ME BEHIND MY BACK...
CAN YOU GO INTO DETAIL?!
HUHP?! UH...
HE SAID THAT YOUR MIND WORKS IN FUNNY WAYS...
YOU'RE LIKE A BASEBALL PLAYER WHO WOULD USE A BASEBALL BAT TO WRITE CALLIGRAPHY.
IT WAS SUCH A NICE COMPLI-MENT.
THAT'S NOT A COMPLI-MENT!!
?!
THAT LITTLE BRAT...
CRACK

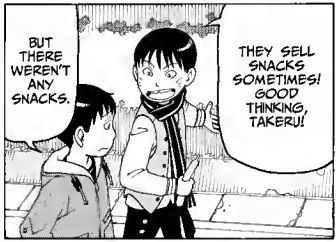
OKAY, YAMA-MOTO-KUN.
YOU AND I ARE GOING TO LOOK FOR A GORGON'S LABYRINTH.
HUH?!
STUPID TAKERU.
IT'S A RACE TO SEE WHO CAN FIND THAT PIECE OF JUNK FIRST!


UH...
I MAY HAVE SOME HELPFUL INFORMA-TION, THEN...
OH? LET'S HEAR IT.

SIGN: SHOWA PARK
庄和公園
MAN, MY FEET ARE KILLING ME!

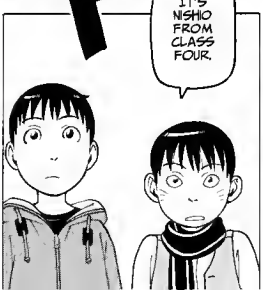
ド
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

I HAD PEGGED THE CONVENIENCE STORE, SUPER-MARKET...
...AND CANDY STORE AS PLACES TO GO...
...BUT I FORGOT ABOUT THE GROCERY STORE.


THEY SELL SNACKS SOMETIMES! GOOD THINKING, TAKERU!
BUT THERE WEREN'T ANY SNACKS.

LET'S TRY HITTING THE UNUSUAL PLACES...
...THAT SOME-TIMES SELL SNACKS.

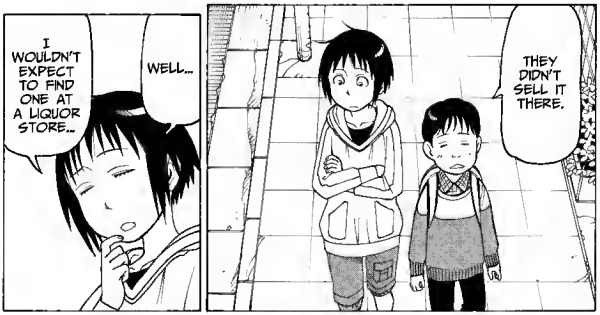
WAIT, LOOK OVER THERE...

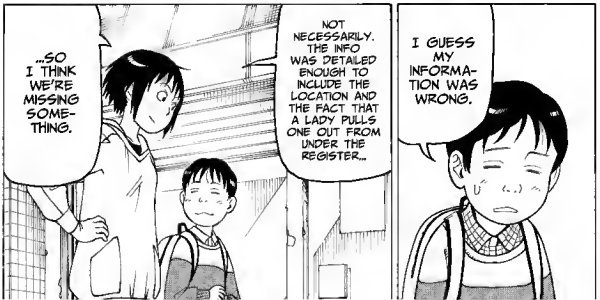

IT'S NISHIO FROM CLASS FOUR.

HEY!
YO, WHERE YOU HEADED?
WE'RE LOOKING FOR A GORGON'S LABYRINTH.
HMM...
I HAVE SOME ADVICE FOR YOU, THEN.
IF YOU GO TO THE LIQUOR STORE IN SHOWA AND ASK FOR A GORGON'S LABYRINTH...
...THE LADY WILL PULL ONE OUT FROM UNDER THE REGISTER AND SELL IT TO YOU.
LIQUOR STORE?!
OKAY, LET'S GO!
WHERE'S THE LIQUOR STORE?
GO THROUGH THE LOT OVER THERE. NO GUARANTEES, THOUGH. I HEARD THIS FROM SOMEONE ELSE.

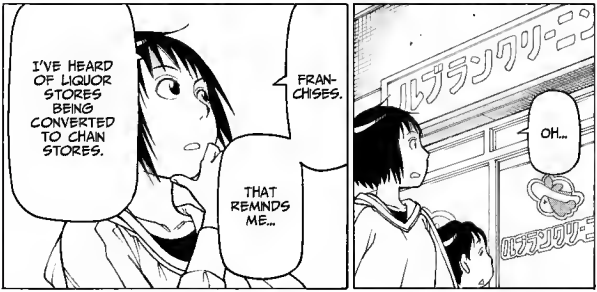
BUILDING: LIQUOR TIGER

SOMEONE ELSE JUST DROPPED BY LOOKING FOR THE SAME THING.
IS SOMEBODY TELLING PEOPLE WE SELL THAT HERE?
WE DON'T SELL THAT HERE.
JUST KIDDING.
ガク
STUMBLE


I WOULDN'T EXPECT TO FIND ONE AT A LIQUOR STORE...
WELL...
THEY DIDN'T SELL IT THERE.


...SO I THINK WE'RE MISSING SOMETHING.
NOT NECESSARILY. THE INFO WAS DETAILED ENOUGH TO INCLUDE THE LOCATION AND THE FACT THAT A LADY PULLS ONE OUT FROM UNDER THE REGISTER...
I GUESS MY INFORMATION WAS WRONG.

SIGN: LEBLANC CLEANING

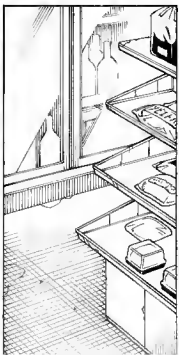


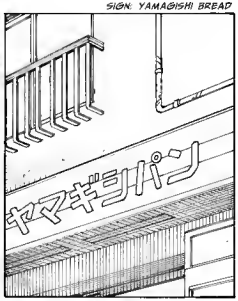
SIGNS: PINE MART, DRUG CLOWN

野郎寿司
フジミ
たかすぎ弁当
ハッピーアイスクリーム
IF THE STORE ALSO SELLS LIQUOR, WE'LL HAVE HIT THE JACKPOT.
EVEN IF THE STORE HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED, IF IT STILL SELLS ALCOHOL, THE LOCALS WILL STILL REFER TO IT AS A LIQUOR STORE.
AND WE'LL FIND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR UNDER THE REGISTER OF THAT STORE!

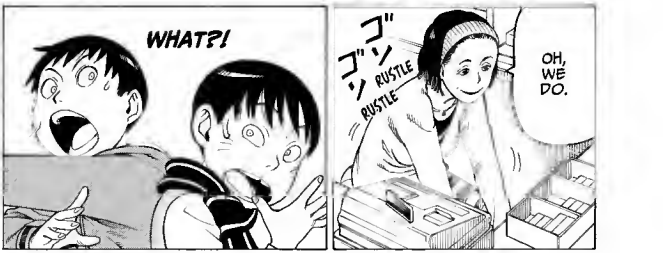
SIGNS: FUJIMI, NORO SUSHI, HAPPY ICE CREAM

SIGN: YAMAGISHI BREAD



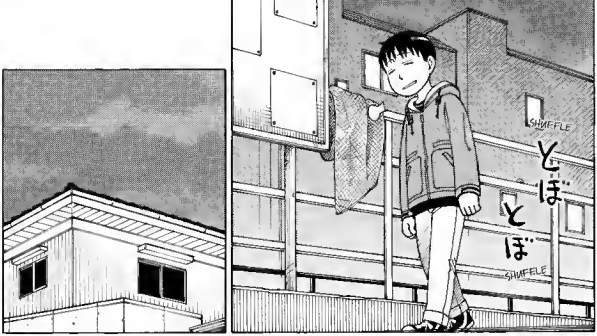


I'M GUESSING YOU DON'T HAVE...
UM...
...A GORGON'S LABYRINTH...
YEAH, YEAH.
WE NEED TO CHECK INSIDE EVERY STORE.
IT WON'T HAVE ANY...
MAKKI, HERE'S A PLACE.

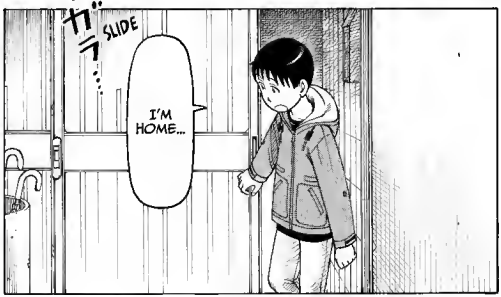

WHAT?!
ゴソ
ゴソ
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
OH, WE DO.

WE REALLY FOUND ONE!
BOX: GORGON'S LABYRINTH
WE REALLY FOUND ONE...?
REAL-LY?!

IT'S POPULAR, SO THE LIMIT IS ONE PER PERSON...
...BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE LEFT.
REALLY?!
WHAT NOW...?
THERE'S ONLY ONE LEFT.
BOTH OF US LOOKED TO-GETHER.
DO WE JUST LEAVE...?
.....
.....
MAKKI.
.....
.....
ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS!
IT GOES TO THE WINNER!
NO HARD FEEL-INGS.
...GOT IT!



BAG: YAMAGISHI BREAD



CHAPTER 117 / END

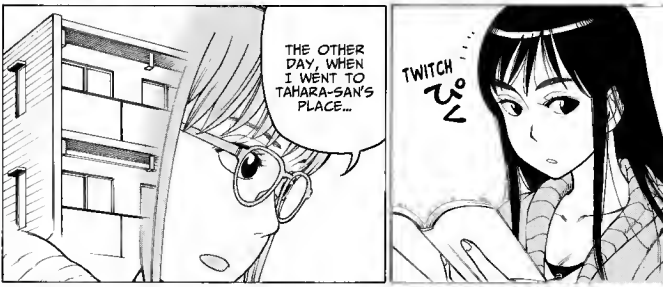
CHAPTER 118
FANTASY NOVEL

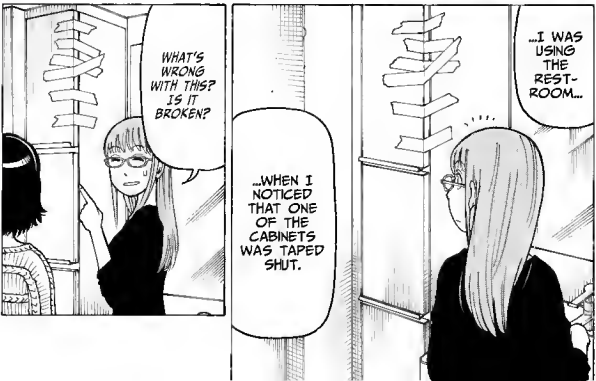
SIGN: CAFE

SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE

YOU SHOULD WEAR WARMER SOCKS, THEN.
CAN'T CONCEN-TRATE BECAUSE MY FEET ARE TOO COLD.
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE CON-CENTRATING ON ANYTHING RIGHT NOW...
...AND THEY'LL JUST KEEP YOUR FROZEN FEET REFRIGER-ATED.
WHEN YOU SUFFER FROM COLD INTOLERANCE, YOU CAN WEAR THERMOSES ON YOUR FEET...
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SUFFER FROM COLD INTOLERANCE.
YOU'VE TAKEN INSULTS TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL...
PIPING HOT BUNS...?
PIPING HOT BUNS LIKE YOU COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND.

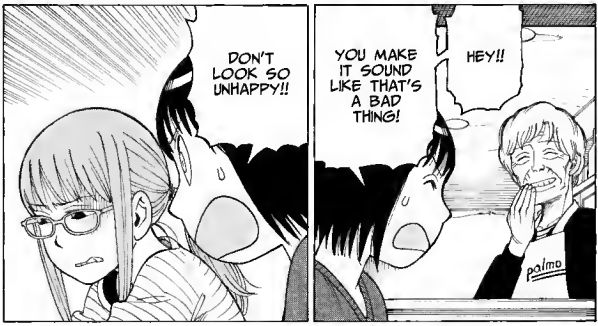
OH, WANNA HEAR A SCARY STORY?
WELL, I GUESS WE CAN CHAT UNTIL YOUR FEET HAVE WARMED UP.


THE OTHER DAY, WHEN I WENT TO TAHARA-SAN'S PLACE...
TWITCH ぴく


WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS? IS IT BROKEN?
...WHEN I NOTICED THAT ONE OF THE CABINETS WAS TAPED SHUT.
...I WAS USING THE REST-ROOM...

BUT THEN THAT STICK-IN-THE-MUD TAHARA-SAN SAID THIS WITH AN ABSOLUTELY STRAIGHT FACE.
NO.
THERE'S A WOMAN'S FACE INSIDE.
SCARY.
GOOD ONE!
SHORT AND SWEET WHILE PROVIDING A GOOD SCARE...!
HEY!! DON'T MAKE IT SOUND LIKE I MADE UP THIS STORY!!
YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME WITH THAT GROUP LATELY.
WHAT'S THIS? ARE YOU JEALOUS?
HUH?
WHAT?
?
WHY...? I DON'T GET IT.
YOU'RE REALLY ANNOY-ING, YOU KNOW?

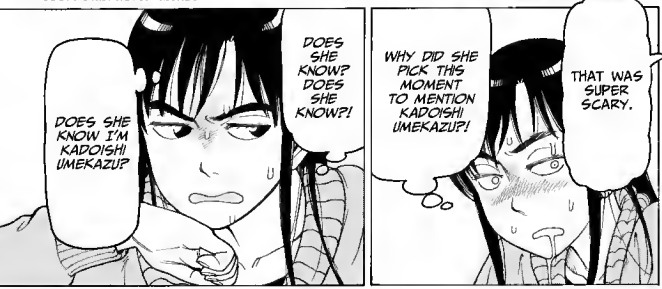
TOSHIKO-CHAN'S STARTING TO SOUND AND ACT LIKE HOTORI...
HA HA HA HA
I'VE NEVER HEARD THAT ONE BEFORE.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SCARY STORIES THAT WILL HELP WARM MY FEET?

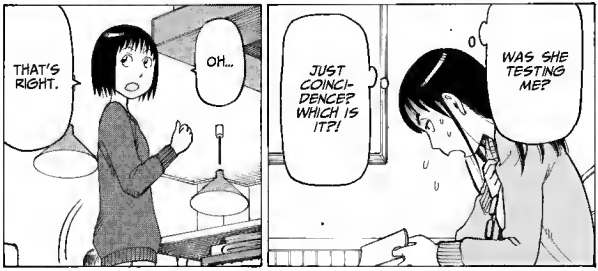

DON'T LOOK SO UNHAPPY!!
YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE THAT'S A BAD THING!
HEY!!
palmo

YOU'RE LIKE A WILD ANIMAL.
DEEPEST FEAR? I GUESS I'M SCARED OF FIRE AND CARS...
WHAT IS YOUR DEEPEST FEAR?
I'M CURIOUS NOW.

異界村
AFTER WANDERING INTO A SNOWBOUND VILLAGE, IT WAS COMPLETELY EMPTY...
...DESPITE ALL THE SIGNS THAT PEOPLE HAD BEEN LIVING THERE...
OH, A KADOISHI UMEKAZU STORY I READ LAST SUMMER WAS PRETTY SCARY.
>CHOKE<

BOOK: OTHERWORLD VILLAGE


DOES SHE KNOW I'M KADOISHI UMEKAZU?
DOES SHE KNOW? DOES SHE KNOW?!
WHY DID SHE PICK THIS MOMENT TO MENTION KADOISHI UMEKAZU?!
THAT WAS SUPER SCARY.



SHE SAYS THAT NOTHING IS MORE BORING THAN LISTENING TO SOMEONE ELSE NARRATE A DREAM.
KON-SENPAI SAID IT'S TABOO TO USE NIGHTMARES WHEN TELLING SCARY STORIES.
WHEN I WAS READING THAT STORY, I HAD A REALLY SCARY NIGHTMARE.
I THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE STORY.

AT LEAST, THAT'S THE FEELING I GOT.
WHAT WAS IT...?
I WAS JUST THINKING THAT IT MIGHT BE RELATED TO MY DEEPEST FEAR...
..DON'T YOU THINK...
WELL, I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OF THE DETAILS.

BUT WHEN I TRY TO REMEMBER, IT ESCAPES ME...
I CAN FEEL...
...SOMETHING LEFT AROUND HERE.

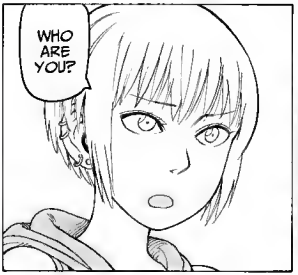
ROARRRR
ゴオオー
HUH?
KABO
WHEN DID I FALL ASLEEP?
...HUH?
WHOA!
WHERE DID SHE COME FROM...?
HUH?

I COULD HAVE SWORN THAT YOU JUST APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE.
HOLD ON, YOUNG LADY.

SAY, WHEN DID I FALL ASLEEP HERE?
HMMM? MY HEAD IS SPINNING...
GRAN, CAN I GET AN ICED COFFEE?

WHY ARE YOU STANDING THERE WITH AN APRON ON?
WHOA! HUH?!
KON-SENPAI?

NO...
?
FUTABA-CHAN, DID YOU NOTICE HER COME IN?

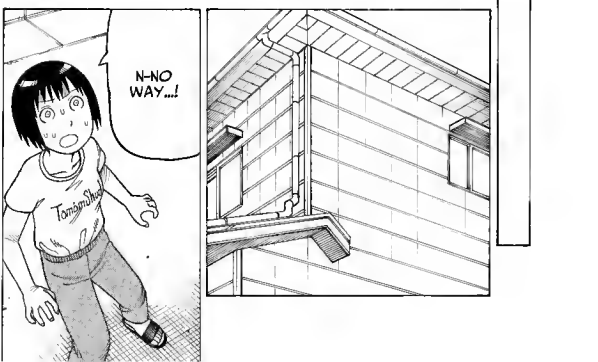

WHO ARE YOU?

HUH? NO...
IS SHE YOUR FRIEND, FUTABA-CHAN?

IS THIS ANOTHER PRANK?
UM...
Tamám Shud
...
Tamám Shud
...I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED SOMETHING BETTER.
AND CONSIDERING THAT SHIZUKA-NEECHAN IS INVOLVED IN THIS...
I DON'T KNOW HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO REACT.
YOU NEED TO MAKE THE SETTING EASIER TO GUESS.
OH! YOU'RE PRETENDING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM?!
UM, WHO ARE YOU, YOUNG LADY?
YOU ALSO KNOW MY NAME?
WAIT.

WHY AM I NOT WEARING ANY SHOES?!
HUH?!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ISN'T MAKING ANY SENSE.
NO, REALLY.
...SOMETHING'S WRONG.
I CAN'T REMEMBER HOW I GOT HERE.
AND I'M IN MY PAJAMAS!
GRAN, CAN YOU LEND ME A PAIR OF FLIP-FLOPS?
UM... I'M GONNA LEAVE NOW.
AND THE COFFEE TASTES THE WAY IT USUALLY DOES.
BUT THIS SEEMS TOO DETAILED FOR A DREAM.
IS THIS A DREAM?

SIGN: CAFE SEASIDE



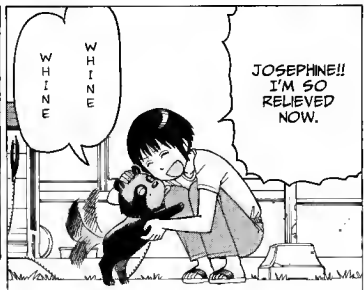
I'M STARTING TO FEEL FAINT...
MAN, THIS IS WEIRD...

DID WE REMODEL?! WHEN...?
WH-WHY DOES THE WALL LOOK COM-PLETELY DIFFER-ENT?!

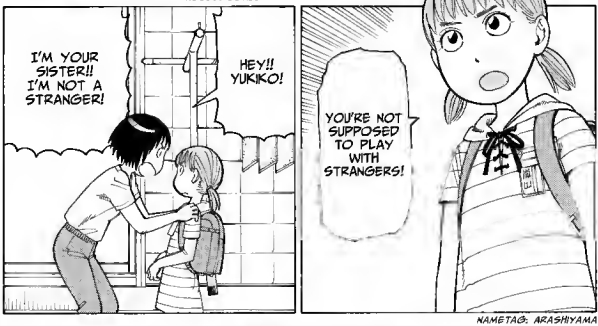
OH!

WHINE

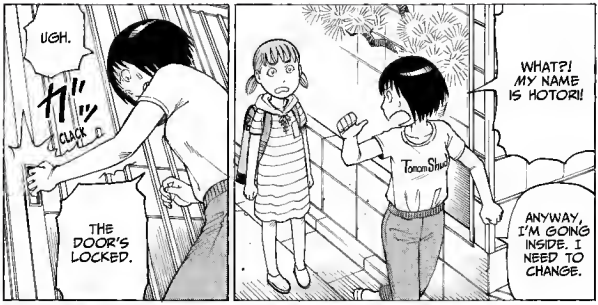
BONUS!!

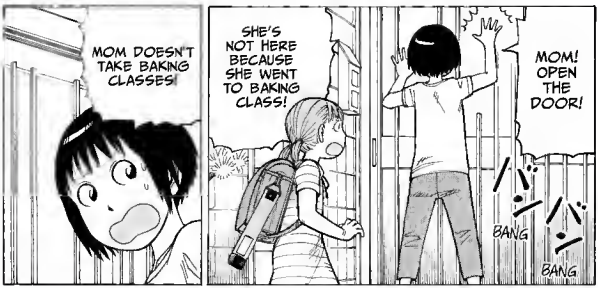

WHINE
WHINE
WHINE
JOSEPHINE!! I'M SO RELIEVED NOW.

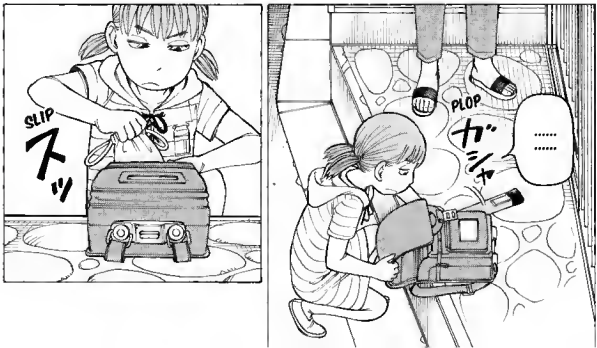
HOUSE: BONUS

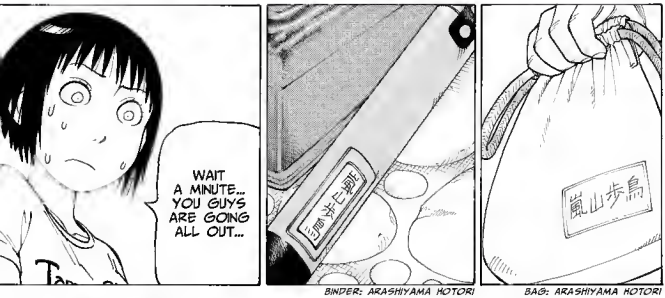


NAMETAG: ARASHIYAMA

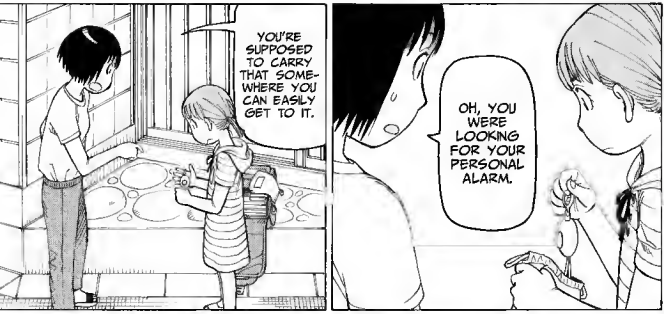

UGH.
ガッ
CLICK
THE DOOR'S LOCKED.
WHAT?! MY NAME IS HOTORI!
TomomShuu
ANYWAY, I'M GOING INSIDE. I NEED TO CHANGE.


MOM DOESN'T TAKE BAKING CLASSES!
SHE'S NOT HERE BECAUSE SHE WENT TO BAKING CLASS!
MOM! OPEN THE DOOR!
バン
BANG
バン
BANG


SLIP
スッ
PLOP
ガシャ
.....
.....



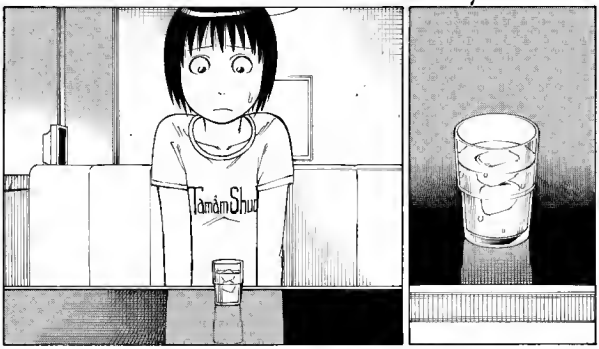
BINDER: ARASHIYAMA HOTORI BAG: ARASHIYAMA HOTORI

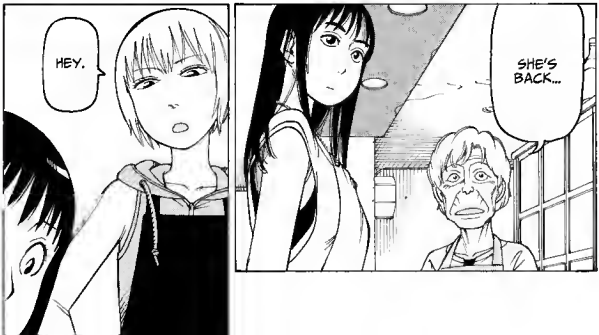


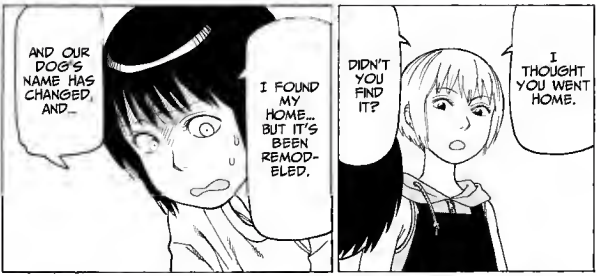
ピピピ

CLAP
パン
BEEP
ピ
ピ
BEEP
HEY! THAT'S ONLY FOR GRENADES!!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
ピピピピピ
DAMN!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
ピピピピピ
UGH.
THERE'S A WEIRDO HERE!!
POLICE!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
WHAT'S GOING ON...?
TO BE CONTINUED

CHAPTER 119 FANTASY NOVEL, PART 2



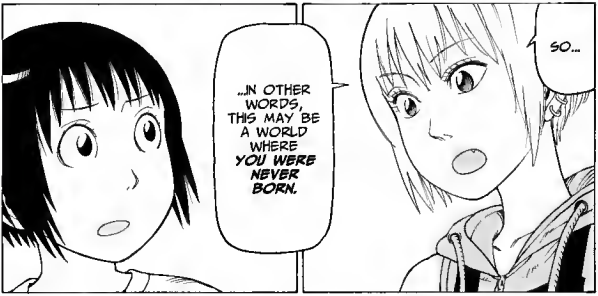


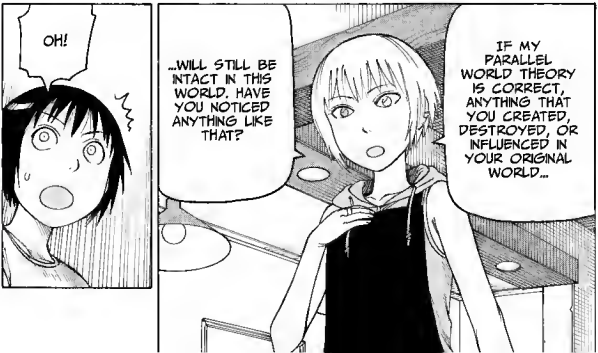


PAPER: KANTO NEWS

FUTABA-CHAN, IS IT YOUR BIRTH-DAY?
YES, IT IS...
THAT'S RIGHT!!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TYPHOON THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO COME THROUGH?!
THERE'S SOME GIGANTIC STORM COMING THAT'S SUPPOSED TO PASS OVER JAPAN.
KON-SENPAI CALLED ME AND TOLD ME TO RUN AWAY...
THERE HASN'T BEEN A TYPHOON IN A WHILE.
AS I THOUGHT!
SO...
HAVE YOU COME FROM A PARALLEL WORLD?!
Tamam Shud

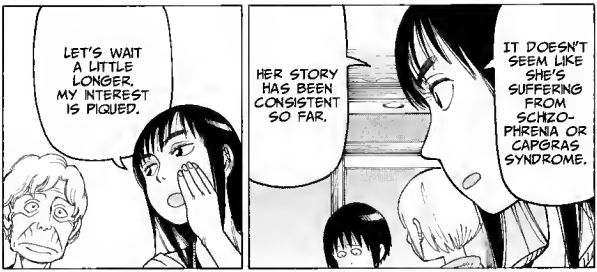
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
I'VE READ ABOUT IT IN NOVELS.
IT'S THE IDEA THAT THERE ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF SIMILAR YET DIFFERENT WORLDS OUT THERE.
YOU COULD ALSO CALL IT AN ALTERNATE REALITY.

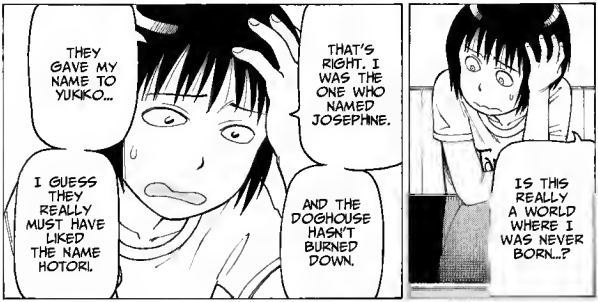

...IN OTHER WORDS, THIS MAY BE A WORLD WHERE ***YOU WERE NEVER BORN.***
SO...


OH!
...WILL STILL BE INTACT IN THIS WORLD. HAVE YOU NOTICED ANYTHING LIKE THAT?
IF MY PARALLEL WORLD THEORY IS CORRECT, ANYTHING THAT YOU CREATED, DESTROYED, OR INFLUENCED IN YOUR ORIGINAL WORLD...

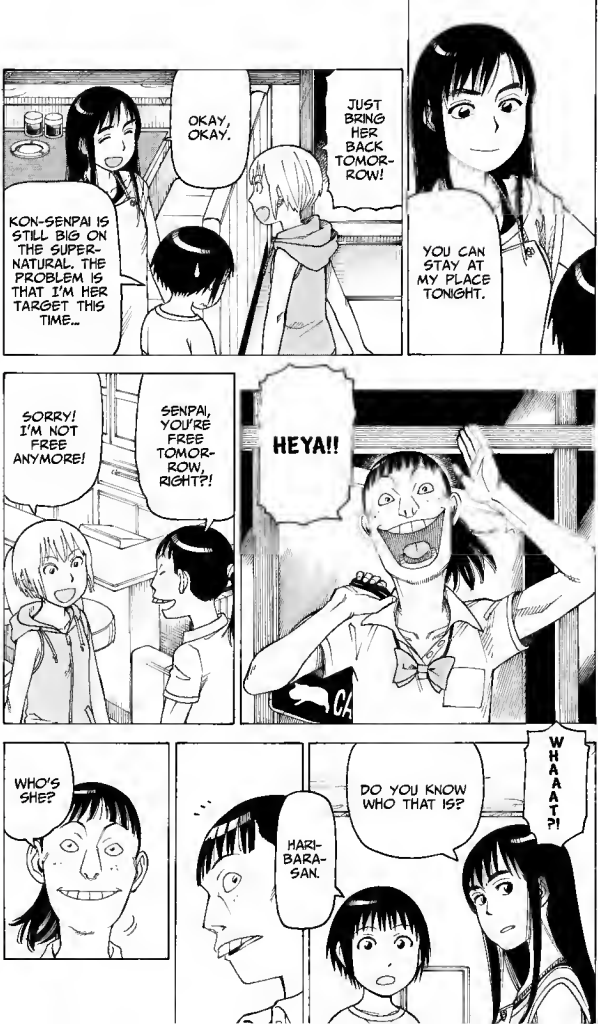
SIGN: NAITO DENTAL CLINIC

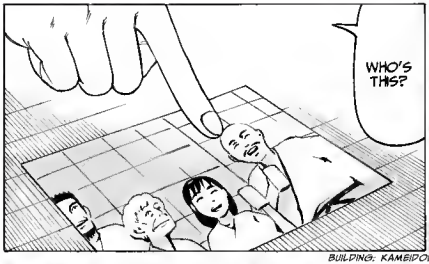
CONSIDERING IT TOOK ME A YEAR TO GET FUTABA-CHAN TO LOOK ME IN THE EYE WHEN TALKING, I'M SHOCKED BY THIS OUTBURST.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I'M RIGHT.


LET'S WAIT A LITTLE LONGER. MY INTEREST IS PIQUED.
HER STORY HAS BEEN CONSISTENT SO FAR.
IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE SHE'S SUFFERING FROM SCHIZO-PHRENIA OR CAPGRAS SYNDROME.

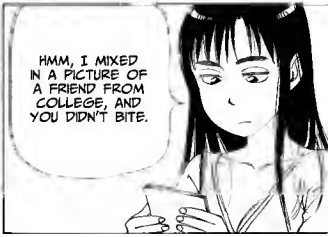

THEY GAVE MY NAME TO YUKIKO...
I GUESS THEY REALLY MUST HAVE LIKED THE NAME HOTORI.
THAT'S RIGHT. I WAS THE ONE WHO NAMED JOSEPHINE.
AND THE DOGHOUSE HASN'T BURNED DOWN.
IS THIS REALLY A WORLD WHERE I WAS NEVER BORN...?

I'LL HELP YOU BRAIN-STORM, SO COME BACK HERE TOMORROW.
OUR WORLD WILL HAVE BEEN ALTERED BY YOUR PRESENCE, THOUGH.
CHEER UP. YOU WERE ABLE TO COME HERE, SO THERE MUST BE A WAY BACK.


JUST BRING HER BACK TOMOR-ROW!
YOU CAN STAY AT MY PLACE TONIGHT.
OKAY, OKAY.
KON-SENPAI IS STILL BIG ON THE SUPER-NATURAL. THE PROBLEM IS THAT I'M HER TARGET THIS TIME...
SENPAI, YOU'RE FREE TOMOR-ROW, RIGHT?!
SORRY! I'M NOT FREE ANYMORE!
HEYA!!
WHAAAT?!
DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT IS?
HARI-BARA-SAN.
WHO'S SHE?

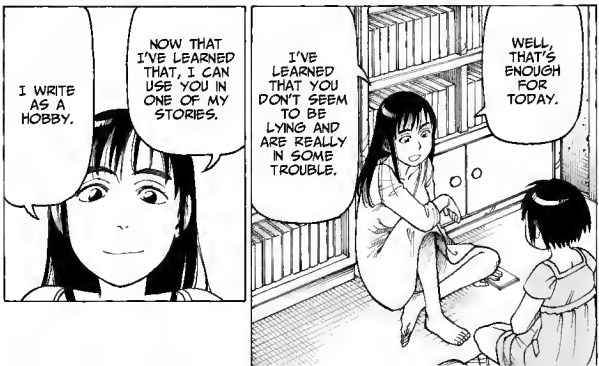


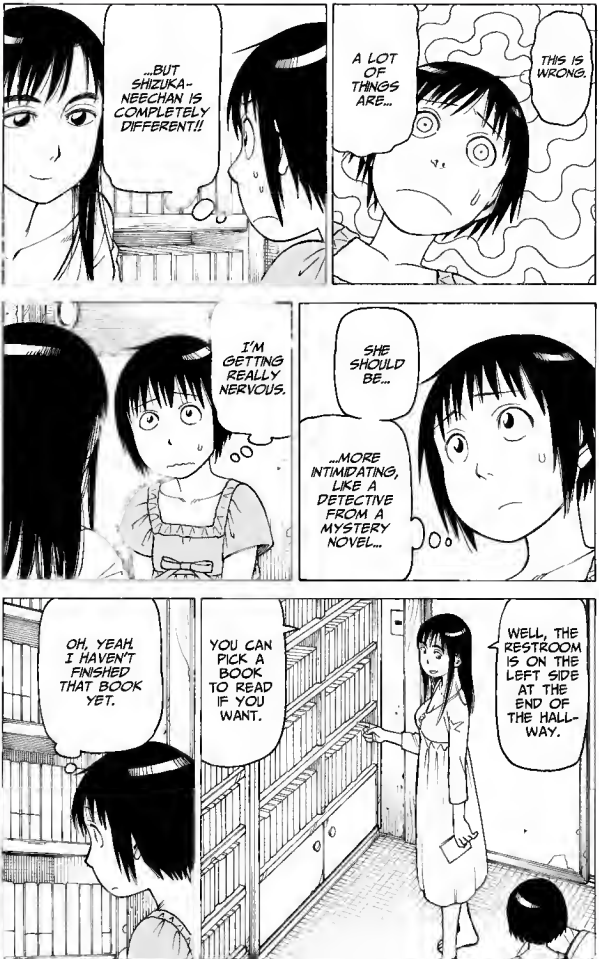
BUILDING: KAMBIDOU ANTIQUES (WE BUY AND SELL)



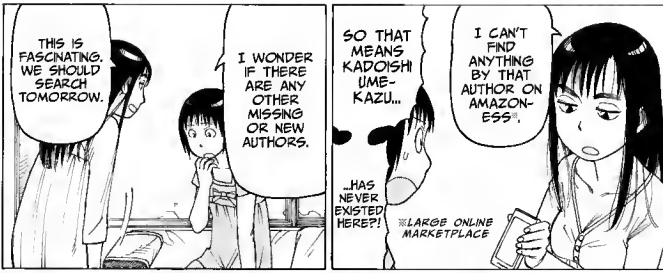
...BUT SEASIDE WAS NEVER TURNED INTO A MAID CAFE...
...AND THE TWO OF THEM ARE A COUPLE.
IT'S TRUE THAT TOSHIKO-CHAN STARTED WORKING AT THE CAFE BECAUSE OF HIROYUKI-KUN...
BUT THE CIRCUM-STANCES AREN'T QUITE THE SAME.

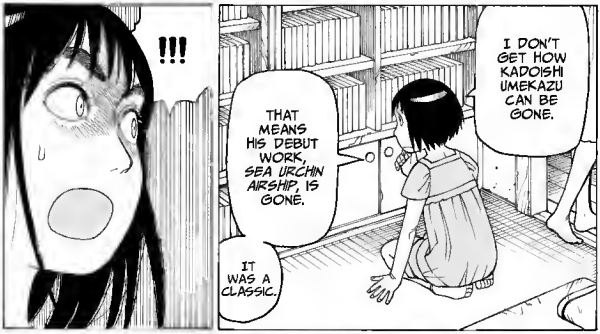
...AND NOW SHE'S WORKING AT SEASIDE WHILE GOING TO COLLEGE.
FUTABA-CHAN WAS A BIT OF A TRUANT IN HIGH SCHOOL, BUT HARUBARA HARUE-CHAN HELPED HER GET ACCEPTED TO HER FIRST CHOICE SCHOOL...


I WRITE AS A HOBBY.
NOW THAT I'VE LEARNED THAT, I CAN USE YOU IN ONE OF MY STORIES.
I'VE LEARNED THAT YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE LYING AND ARE REALLY IN SOME TROUBLE.
WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY.


...BUT SHIZUKA-NEECHAN IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!!
A LOT OF THINGS ARE...
THIS IS WRONG.
I'M GETTING REALLY NERVOUS.
SHE SHOULD BE...
...MORE INTIMIDATING, LIKE A DETECTIVE FROM A MYSTERY NOVEL...
OH, YEAH. I HAVEN'T FINISHED THAT BOOK YET.
YOU CAN PICK A BOOK TO READ IF YOU WANT.
WELL, THE RESTROOM IS ON THE LEFT SIDE AT THE END OF THE HALL-WAY.

UM, DO YOU HAVE OTHER-WORLD VILLAGE?
OTHER-WORLD VILLAGE?
NEVER HEARD OF IT.
WHAT?!
IT'S BY KADOISHI UMEKAZU
KADO-ISHI?
THAT'S THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR?
.....
.....
HUH...? SHIMABE HIROTO'S HERE...
MICHIO CHUUSUKE AND HAYASHI HIROSHI ARE HERE...
YONE-ZAWA HONNO IS HERE.
NOZAWA HIZASHI AND INU PEANUTS, TOO...
ASSUMING THAT THE PARALLEL WORLD EXPLANA-TION IS RIGHT...
?
...WHY IS KADOISHI UMEKAZU NOT HERE?


I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING BY THAT AUTHOR ON AMAZON-ESS*.
SO THAT MEANS KADOISHI UME-KAZU...
...HAS NEVER EXISTED HERE?!
*LARGE ONLINE MARKETPLACE
I WONDER IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER MISSING OR NEW AUTHORS.
THIS IS FASCINATING. WE SHOULD SEARCH TOMORROW.

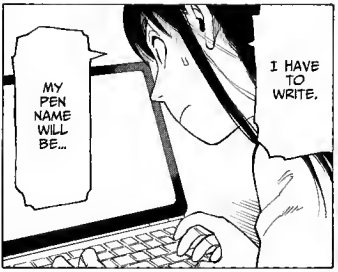

I DON'T GET HOW KADOISHI UMEKAZU CAN BE GONE.
THAT MEANS HIS DEBUT WORK, *SEA URCHIN AIRSHIP*, IS GONE.
IT WAS A CLASSIC.
!!!

I KNOW YOU'VE HAD A LONG DAY.
YOU SHOULD GET SOME SLEEP.

THUMP
ドカ
THUMP
ドカ
THUMP
パタン
CLICK
バサ
WHUMP
Draft
Sea Urchin Airship
...IS ME!
THE AUTHOR KADOISHI UMEKAZU...

IF SHE REALLY CAME FROM A PARALLEL WORLD, LIKE FUTABA-CHAN SAID...
...THAT MEANS IN HER WORLD...
...MY STORY WAS PUBLISHED.
THIS WAS MY DEBUT WORK...
Draft
Idea Marker Workshop
I GAVE UP ON FINISHING IT BECAUSE THE STORY WAS ALL OVER THE PLACE...
BUT IF I HAD FINISHED IT...
...IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL-LIKED.

THIS IS REALLY SCARY.
THIS IS SCARY.
NOBODY KNOWS ME...
NO-WHERE TO GO...
I HAVE NOWHERE TO LIVE...
THIS IS THE SCARIEST THING THAT COULD EVER HAPPEN TO ME.
NOBODY NEEDS ME...

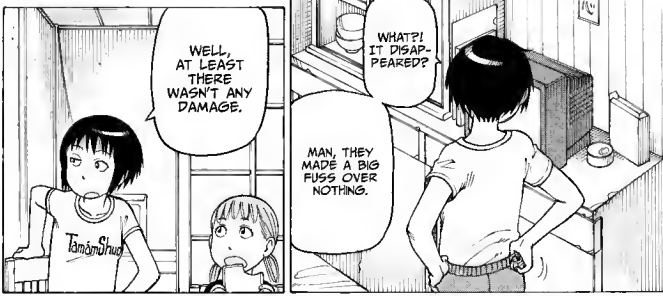


SCREEN: KADOISHI UMEKAZU

HUH?
WHOOAA!
ROARRRRR
WAHH!!
WHOA!
HOLD ON!!

ゴオオオ
ROARRRRRR
ペシ
SLAM
BOOK: OTHERWORLD VILLAGE
スコ
WHAP
異世界村
ドスン
THUD
OW...
OW...
OW...

I FEEL LIKE I HAD A REALLY SCARY NIGHTMARE.
OW, THAT HURTS...
CHIRP
CHIRP CHIRP
CHIRP
I THINK I LEARNED SOMETHING IMPORTANT ABOUT MYSELF, BUT...
OH, WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE TYPHOON?
THIS IS MORNING NEWS W.A.S.D. ON SEPTEMBER 8TH.
A LARGE TYPHOON WAS EXPECTED TO INFLICT SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO JAPAN...
...BUT IT WEAKENED OVER THE OCEAN BEFORE MAKING LANDFALL.

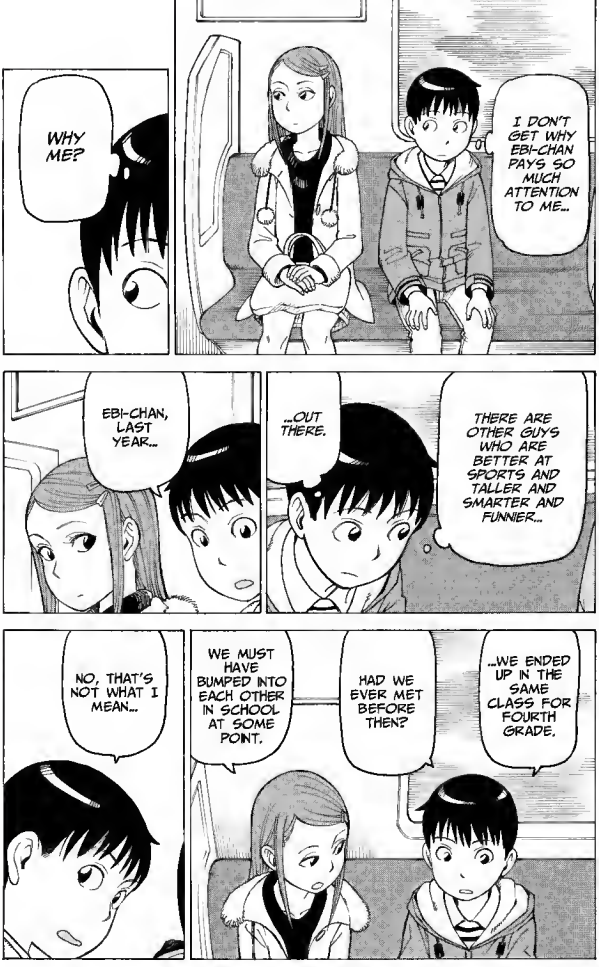


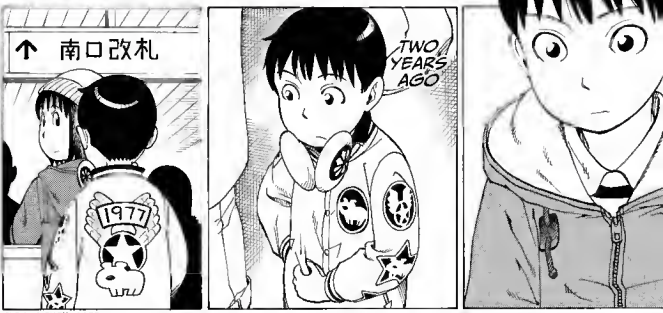
SIGN: BEWARE OF FIRE

SORRY, I FELL ASLEEP.
HEY!
THERE WAS A NIGHTMARE I HAD THE MORNING THAT HAPPENED!
I DON'T CARE WHEN IT HAPPENED!!
JUST REMEMBER THE ACTUAL STORY!!
AH...
YOU'VE AGGRAVATED ME SO MUCH, I'M ALL WARMED UP NOW.
SO DID YOU REMEMBER THE SCARY STORY YOU WANTED TELL ME?
I DID!
YOU REMEMBER HOW A HUGE TYPHOON WAS SUPPOSED TO HIT IN SEPTEMBER BUT THEN IT DISAPPEARED?
YEAH...

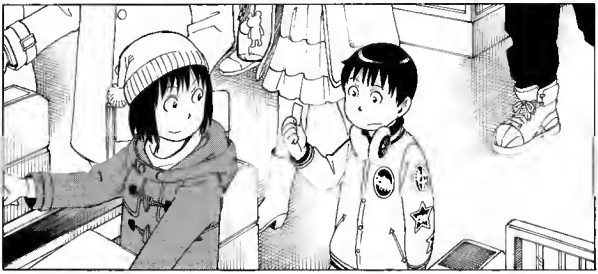
SIGN: NAITOU DENTAL CLINIC

福沢晶の好物

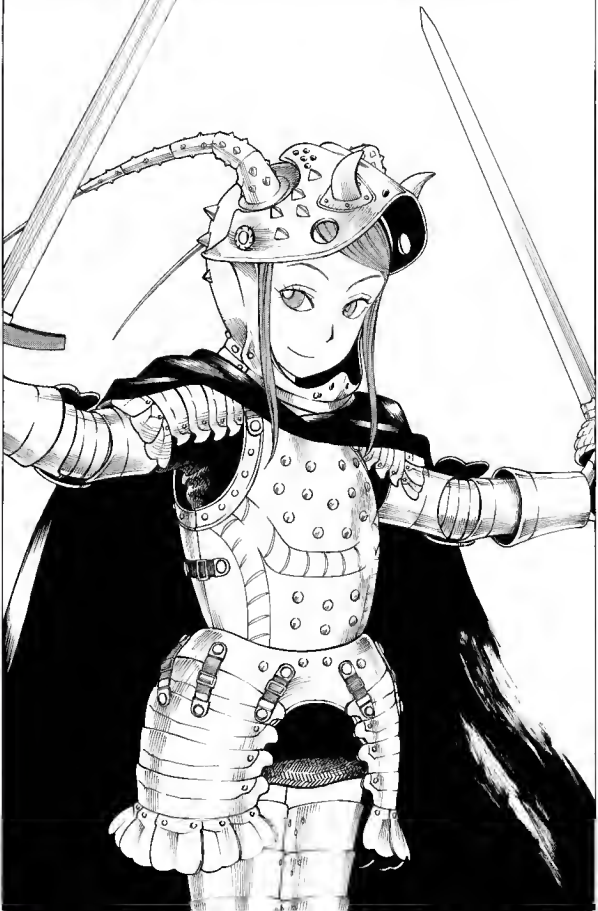

I DON'T GET WHY EBI-CHAN PAYS SO MUCH ATTENTION TO ME...
WHY ME?
...WE ENDED UP IN THE SAME CLASS FOR FOURTH GRADE.
HAD WE EVER MET BEFORE THEN?
WE MUST HAVE BUMPED INTO EACH OTHER IN SCHOOL AT SOME POINT.
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN...
THERE ARE OTHER GUYS WHO ARE BETTER AT SPORTS AND TALLER AND SMARTER AND FUNNIER...
...OUT THERE.
EBI-CHAN, LAST YEAR...



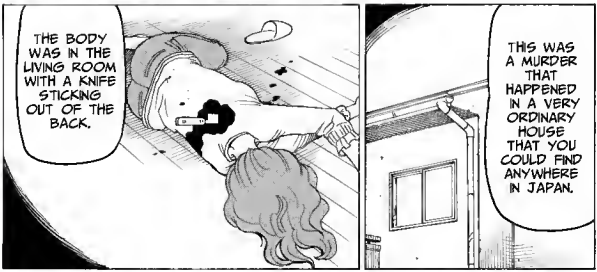
SIGN: SOUTH GATE

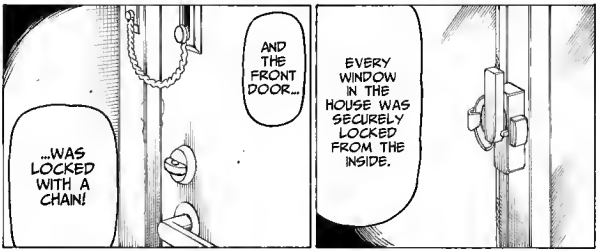


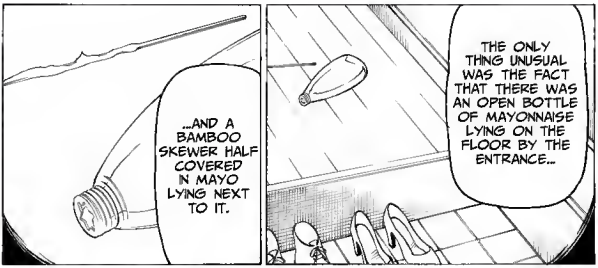
CHAPTER 120 THE LOBSTER RETURNS A FAVOR

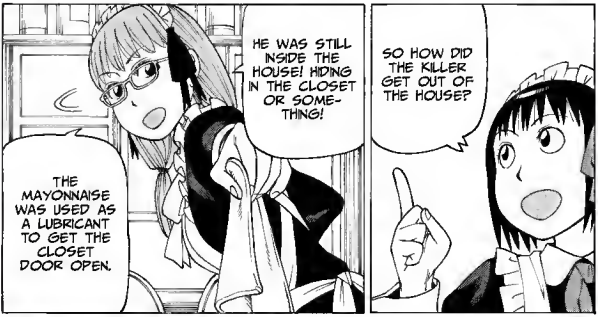


TRY TO VISUALIZE THE SCENE AS I TELL YOU THE STORY.
COFFEE
コーヒー
SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE


THE BODY WAS IN THE LIVING ROOM WITH A KNIFE STICKING OUT OF THE BACK.
THIS WAS A MURDER THAT HAPPENED IN A VERY ORDINARY HOUSE THAT YOU COULD FIND ANYWHERE IN JAPAN.

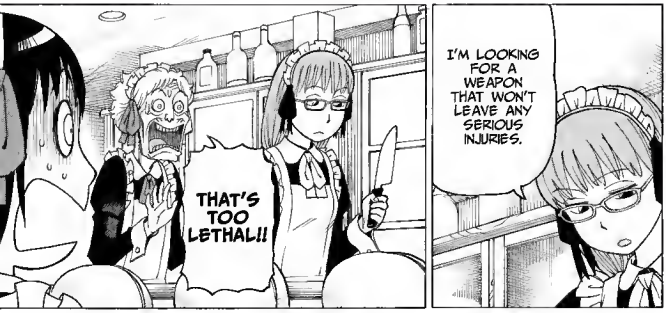

AND THE FRONT DOOR...
EVERY WINDOW IN THE HOUSE WAS SECURELY LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE.
...WAS LOCKED WITH A CHAIN!

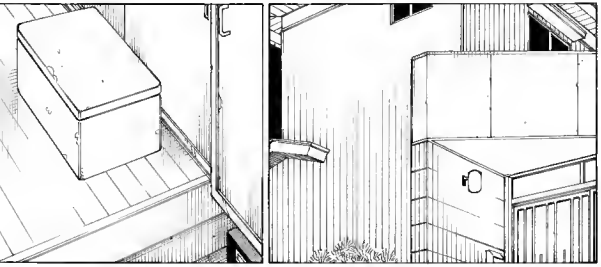

...AND A BAMBOO SKEWER HALF COVERED IN MAYO LYING NEXT TO IT.
THE ONLY THING UNUSUAL WAS THE FACT THAT THERE WAS AN OPEN BOTTLE OF MAYONNAISE LYING ON THE FLOOR BY THE ENTRANCE...


THE MAYONNAISE WAS USED AS A LUBRICANT TO GET THE CLOSET DOOR OPEN.
HE WAS STILL INSIDE THE HOUSE! HIDING IN THE CLOSET OR SOME-THING!
SO HOW DID THE KILLER GET OUT OF THE HOUSE?

THE DEAD BODY WAS THE ONLY THING LEFT INSIDE THE HOUSE. IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT OR SUICIDE, AND THE KILLER WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE.
I LIKE THAT EXPLANATION! BUT YOU'RE WRONG. IT'S NOT THAT TRICKY.
EVERYONE THINK TOGETHER!

AWW, YOU FAIL THE MYSTERY LEVEL 4 EXAM.
I NEVER SIGNED UP FOR ANY EXAMS.
FINE. I DON'T KNOW.
THE MAYONNAISE WAS MEANT TO MISLEAD YOU. THE BACK DOOR WAS UNLOCKED.
I SAID THAT THE ENTRANCE AND WINDOWS ARE LOCKED, BUT I NEVER SAID THAT THE HOUSE WAS COMPLETELY SEALED.
THE KILLER ESCAPED THROUGH THE BACK DOOR.
WHAT?!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
ゴソゴソ
...UM... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THAT'S THE BASIC RULE OF MYSTERY...
IT'S ALL ABOUT WHAT YOU REVEAL AND WHEN TO BE TRICKY INSTEAD OF TRANSPARENT.
SLIP
スッ


I'M LOOKING FOR A WEAPON THAT WON'T LEAVE ANY SERIOUS INJURIES.
THAT'S TOO LETHAL!!



I'M HOME.
CREAK
ギチ…
RUSTLE
カサ…

I SAID NO.
WILL IT BE A HUGE FRIED LOBSTER?!

NO.
HEY!! ARE WE GONNA FRY THE LOBSTER?!

HUH? WHAT'S GOING ON?

WE SHOULDN'T DO THIS!! IT'S NOT RIGHT!
63

THIS?

HUH? WHERE IS IT?! IN THE BATH-ROOM?
IT'S IN THE STYRO-FOAM BOX BY THE ENTRANCE.
OUR RELATIVES SENT US A SPINY LOBSTER.

WE SHOULDN'T KILL IT.
IT'S STILL MOVING.
EWW.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
IT'S STILL ALIVE.
IT WAS STUFFED IN A LITTLE BOX AND TRANSPORTED A LONG WAY. DON'T YOU FEEL SORRY FOR IT?
HE'S BEEN ACTING MORE LIKE A CHEEKY LITTLE BRAT RECENTLY...
...BUT HE'S STILL INNOCENT IN SOME WAYS.
IT'S IMPORTANT TO FEEL EMPATHY, TAKERU.
BUT YOU KNOW, HUMAN SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON THE SACRIFICE OF OTHER CREATURES.
THE PORK WE HAD LAST NIGHT FOR DINNER CAME FROM A LIVING PIG.
I KNOW. FRIED CHICKEN AND SASHIMI ALSO COME FROM LIVING CREATURES, RIGHT?!

ER? EGOISM?
HUH? WHAT?
THAT'S IT!

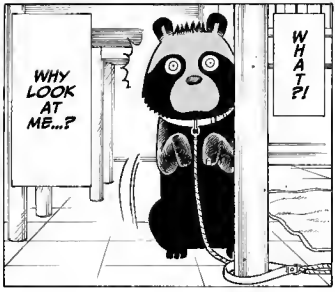
WHAT DO THEY CALL THIS...?
I UNDERSTAND THAT, AND I REALIZE THAT I'M MAKING AN EXCEPTION FOR THIS ONE.

YOU WOULDN'T TRY TO EAT JOSEPHINE, WOULD YOU?!

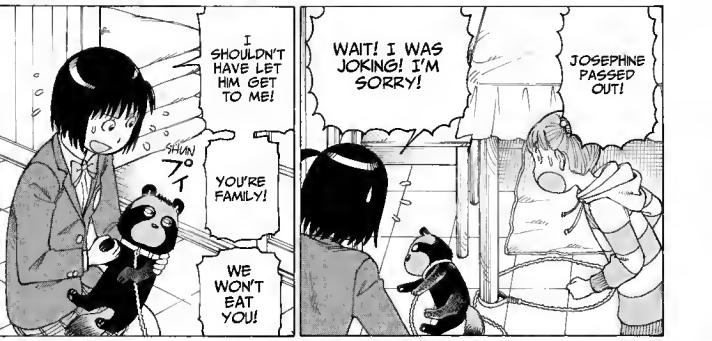
I TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID!

I'M SAYING THAT DESPITE ALL OF THAT, I STILL DON'T WANT TO KILL IT!

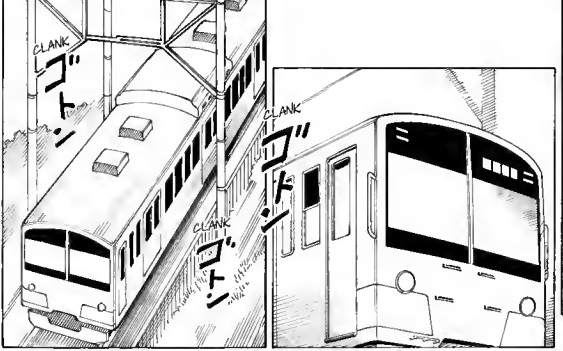
JO... JO...


WHY LOOK AT ME...?
WHAT?!

ドン!!
BOOM!!
JOSEPHINE IS CONSIDERED EMERGENCY RATIONS!!!!
WE'RE SAVING HER AS A LAST RESORT!
ガーン
SHOCK
ペチ
THUD


JOSEPHINE PASSED OUT!
WAIT! I WAS JOKING! I'M SORRY!
I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET HIM GET TO ME!
SHUN
プイ
YOU'RE FAMILY!
WE WON'T EAT YOU!

SEE?
DOGS ARE CUTE, SO THEY'RE KEPT AS PETS. COWS TASTE GOOD, SO THEY'RE TREATED AS FOOD. IF HUMANS ARE ALLOWED TO MAKE SUCH DECISIONS...
63
...THEN I CAN...
...CHOOSE NOT TO KILL THE POOR LITTLE LOBSTER!!
ARE YOU LISTENING TO WHAT HE'S SAYING?!
YOU JUST LOST AN ARGUMENT WITH A THIRD-GRADER.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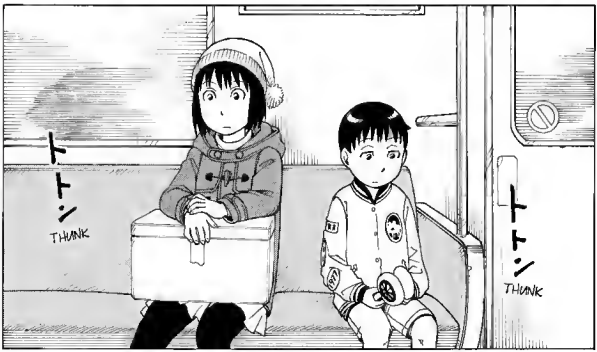

トトン
THUNK
トトン
THUNK

WHEN YOU GROW UP, YOU HAVE TO BUY ME DINNER.
IT'S OKAY.
SORRY, SIS...

...
IT'S QUITE STORY-BOOK.
IT'S NOT EVERY DAY YOU GET TO TAKE A TRIP WITH YOUR BROTHER...
...TO RELEASE A LOBSTER INTO THE OCEAN!
I MEANT YOUR TAKING THE TIME TO COME WITH ME.
IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS DYING TO EAT LOBSTER.

OKAY! THIS SHOULD DO.
WELL, LET'S OPEN IT UP.
YEAH.
COME ON. RELEASE IT.
HUH?
YOU DO IT, SIS.
WHAT? NO WAY. I CAN'T TOUCH THAT.
LOOK, IT'S THE OCEAN.
GO ON.
OKAY!

SPLASH!
ボチャン
WHOOSH
ワワリ
LET'S WALK AROUND A BIT BEFORE GOING HOME.
OKAY, ARE YOU SATISFIED NOW?
IT BOUNCED, SINCE IT'S STILL ALIVE.
DIDN'T IT MOVE KIND OF FUNNY?
YOU SHOULDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING IN RETURN.
DO YOU THINK THAT SPINY LOBSTER WILL RETURN THE FAVOR?

WHEW...
キラ
SPARKLE
キラ
SPARKLE

鮮魚
真
OKAY! I NEED YOUR HELP, THEN!!
I HELP OUT AT OUR STORE.
YEAH.
SANADA, CAN YOU HOLD A SPINY LOBSTER?
THE NIGHT BEFORE

THAT'S CRAZY! IT'S NOT THAT EASY TO PULL A LOBSTER OUT!
THEN I WANT YOU TO PULL IT BACK OUT AND BRING IT BACK TO PROCESS!
SO BECAUSE OF THIS AND THAT, I'M GOING TO RELEASE THIS LOBSTER INTO THE OCEAN TOMORROW WHILE TAKERU IS WATCHING.

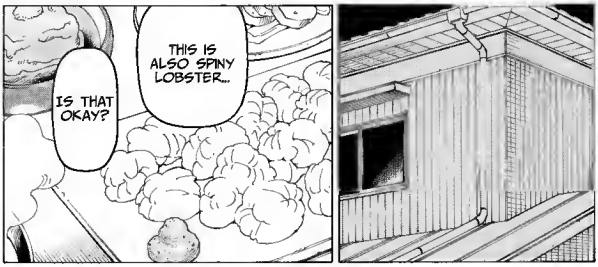
I BOUGHT THIS TRANSPARENT FISHING LINE IN CASE I EVER NEEDED IT FOR A TRICK!
WRAP THIS AROUND THE SPINY LOBSTER!
I SEE. SO YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE IT TIED UP TO BEGIN WITH.
WON'T HE NOTICE?
NOBODY WILL NOTICE UNLESS THEY KNOW TO LOOK FOR THE STRING.
TOMORROW, I'LL BE RELEASING THE LOBSTER TO HUMOR TAKERU...
...BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S RIGHT TO RELEASE THE LOBSTER THAT OUR MOM'S FAMILY SENT US AS A PRESENT.
I'LL TELL TAKERU THE TRUTH ONE DAY.
AND THAT WILL BE WHEN HIS EDUCATION IS COMPLETE.
SANADA, YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW US TOMORROW WITHOUT TAKERU NOTICING.
I'LL TIE THE END OF THE LINE TO THIS SWISS ARMY KNIFE.

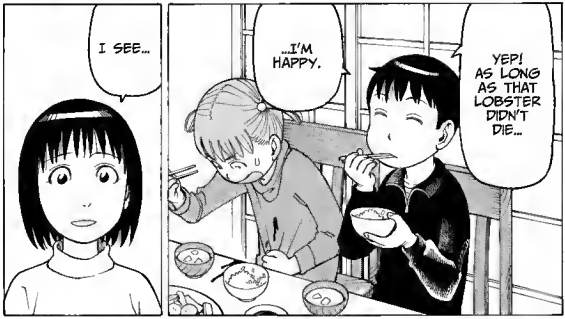
I'LL LEAVE THE KNIFE NEAR THE EDGE OF THE WATER.
THEN WE'LL RELEASE THE LOBSTER.

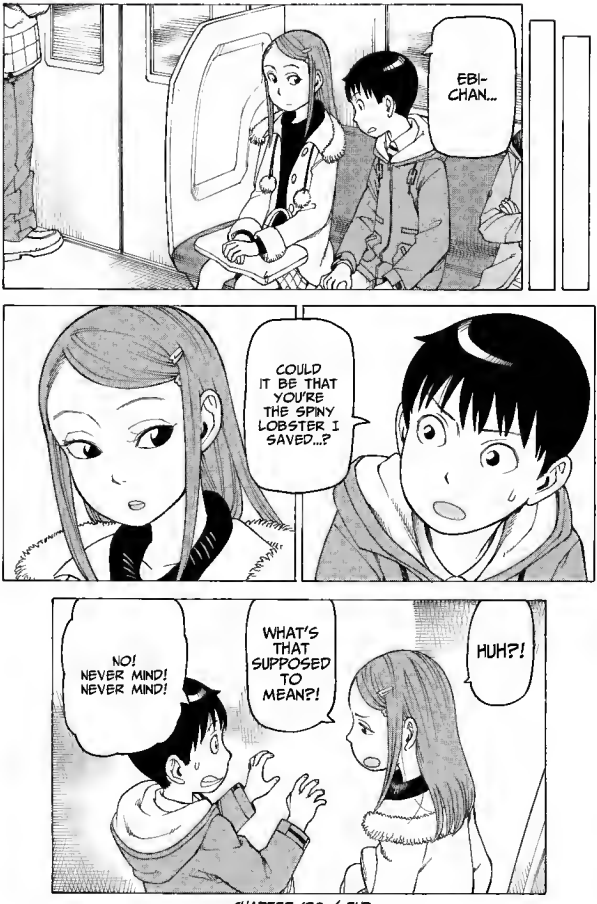
THEN, AFTER WE LEAVE...
RE-VERSE.

NO HARD FEELINGS, LOBSTER...

SIGN: SANADA'S FRESH FISH







CHAPTER 120 / END

JABBER JABBER
JABBER JABBER
STAND.
BOW.
2-A

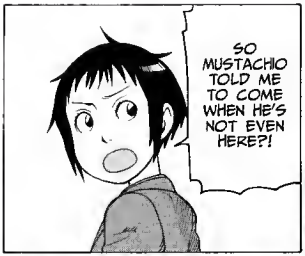
ARASHI-YAMA.

ARASHIYAMA-SAN FROM CLASS 2-A. ARASHIYAMA-SAN FROM CLASS 2-A.
DING DONG DING
WHAT'S UP?

UM... WHO TAKES PRIORITY IN THIS SITUATION? HOMEROOM TEACHER OR TEACHER'S OFFICE?
GO RIGHT ON AHEAD.
GO SEE MR. MIYAZAKI IN THE ART ROOM.

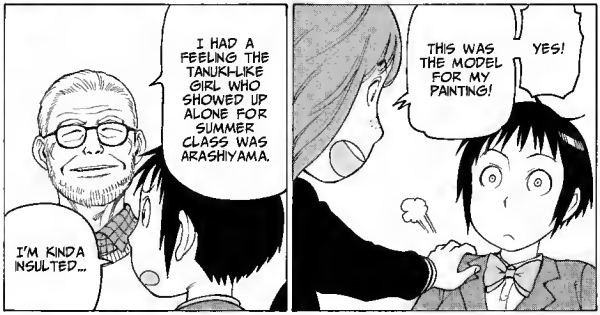
美術室
SIGNS: ART ROOM, MIYAZAKI
COMING IN.
DID I TURN IN A PIECE OF ART THAT CAUGHT HIS EYE?
MR. MIYAZAKI NEVER CALLS STUDENTS TO HIS OFFICE.

HUH?



SIGN: SUPPLY ROOM

UM... UM...
AH! IT'S HER!!
AH, MY STOMACH HURTS NOW...


I'M KINDA INSULTED...
I HAD A FEELING THE TANUKI-LIKE GIRL WHO SHOWED UP ALONE FOR SUMMER CLASS WAS ARASHIYAMA.
THIS WAS THE MODEL FOR MY PAINTING!
YES!

I WAS WORRIED THAT I HAD IMAGINED EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED THAT DAY.
I'M GLAD I FOUND YOU.
※REFER TO VOLUME 12'S "GHOST ART"

MORE LIKE AN ACCIDENT.
IT WASN'T MY IDEA, THOUGH.

YOU CUT YOUR HAIR.

WOW, YOU REALLY DID IT! NO HESITATION AT ALL!
OKAY, RYOU-CHIN.

NO NEED FOR THAT! CALL ME RYOU-CHIN.
ANYWAY, MUROFUSHI-SAN...

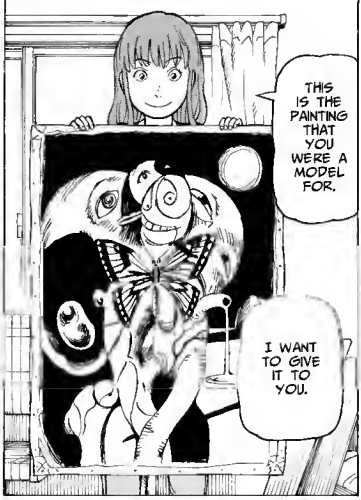
I'LL TELL YOU THAT AND MORE, SO LET'S HEAD OVER TO YOUR HOUSE.
SO WHY DID YOU COME LOOKING FOR ME SIX MONTHS LATER?

HUH? IS IT OKAY? NOT OKAY?

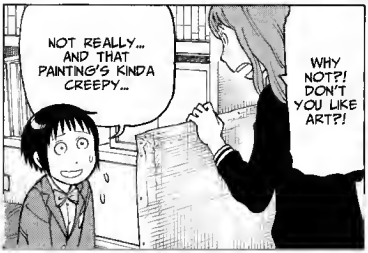
SURE, IT'S PERFECTLY OKAY.

SORRY, CAN I TAKE THE DAY OFF?
UH, TA-TSUN?
HOLD ON. I NEED TO CALL WORK FIRST.
OH, ARE YOU BUSY TODAY?
I RECEIVED PERMIS-SION FROM THE BOSS LADY.
NOT AT ALL.
?
PLEASE DO! PLEASE DO!
AND ONCE THE PAINTING DRIED, I VARNISHED IT AND BROUGHT IT OVER.
SO ANYWAY, IT TAKES ABOUT HALF A YEAR FOR AN OIL PAINTING TO COMPLETELY DRY.
OH, SORRY ABOUT SHOWING UP WITH-OUT ANY NOTICE.

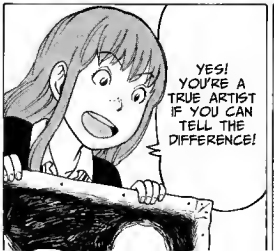
UM... NO, THANK YOU.


THIS IS THE PAINTING THAT YOU WERE A MODEL FOR.
I WANT TO GIVE IT TO YOU.

WHAT?
カ"
ン
SHOCK


NOT REALLY... AND THAT PAINTING'S KINDA CREEPY...
WHY NOT?! DON'T YOU LIKE ART?!

I MEAN, I APPRECI-ATE THE THOUGHT, BUT I HAVE NOWHERE TO PUT IT...

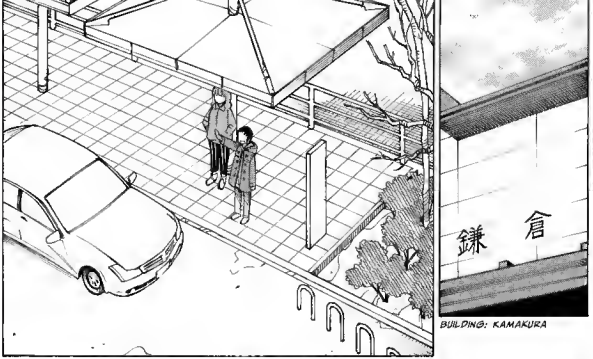

YES! YOU'RE A TRUE ARTIST IF YOU CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE!

IS IT BECAUSE OF THE LIGHTING?
I ACTUALLY THINK IT'S GOTTEN CREEPIER SINCE I SAW IT AT THE MUSEUM.

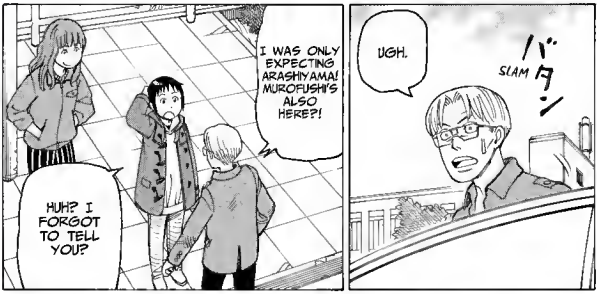
AS AN OIL PAINTING DRIES...
...ITS TEXTURE CONTINUES TO CHANGE.
YOU HAVE TO TAKE THAT INTO ACCOUNT WHEN PAINTING.
OH...
ER, HOLD ON.
I DON'T PAINT.
LOOK!
I SEE CANVASES!
OH... THOSE...
THOSE AREN'T MY PAINTINGS...

OH, THEY'RE MR. MORIAKI'S GRANDFATHER'S PAINTINGS.
WHY DO YOU HAVE THEM?
HE GAVE THEM TO ME.
IT'S A LONG STORY, BUT...
THEN I DON'T CARE.
...
はぁ
はぁ
SCREECH
YOU CAN TAKE THEM IF YOU WANT THEM.
NAH, NO THANKS. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHERS?
NO, BUT MR. MORIAKI PROBABLY HAS MORE AT HIS HOME.

I WANT TO SEE THEM!
LET'S GO!
CAN YOU CALL HIM AND ASK FOR PERMISSION?
WHAT?! ME?
SO ARE THERE ANY DRAWINGS THAT YOU'VE DONE?
I HAVE SOME FROM CLASS...
THIS IS A HORSE?!
A DOG.
HE'LL SAY NO. MORIARKY'S NO FUN AT ALL.
JUST ASK HIM!
HE... HE SAID OKAY RIGHT AWAY.
THIS WEEK-END.

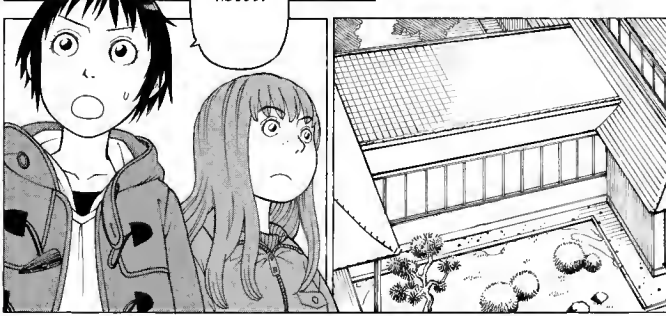


BUILDING: KAMAKURA



ARASHIYAMA AND MUROFUSHI FALL INTO THE SAME CATEGORY OF PEOPLE!
MUROFUSHI RYOU... I WAS NEVER HER HOMEROOM TEACHER, BUT SHE WAS IN MY MATH CLASS, SO, I KNOW HER VERY WELL!
PEOPLE WHO ACT ON INSTINCT, ON A HUNCH, OR ON A WHIM.
NOW THEY'RE TOGETHER, DESPITE BEING IN DIFFERENT GRADES.
DO ARASHIYAMAS FLOCK TOGETHER...?!
SHIVER
ゾッ
ヴォルルルン
VROOOM

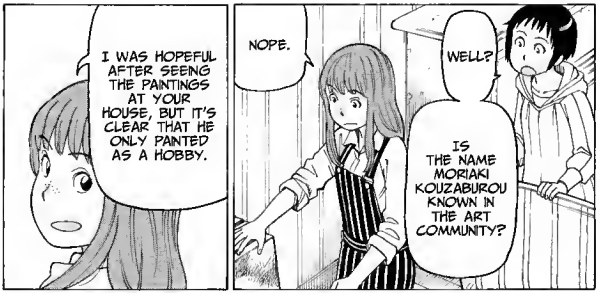
NAMEPLATE: MORIAKI



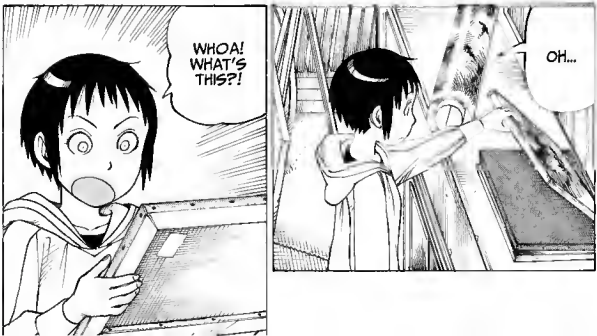
I'LL ARRANGE FOR TEA TO BE BROUGHT OVER, SO FEEL FREE TO LOOK AROUND.

NO KIDDING.
NOW THAT'S SOMETHING YOU'LL ONLY EVER HEAR A RICH PERSON SAY.

HMM...


WELL?
IS THE NAME MORIAKI KOUZABUROU KNOWN IN THE ART COMMUNITY?
NOPE.
I WAS HOPEFUL AFTER SEEING THE PAINTINGS AT YOUR HOUSE, BUT IT'S CLEAR THAT HE ONLY PAINTED AS A HOBBY.

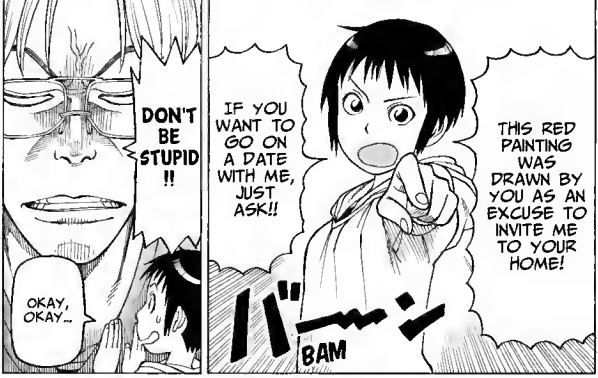
HOW FAMOUS ARE YOU, RYOU-CHIN? YOU WON AN AWARD, RIGHT?
ONE AWARD ISN'T GOING TO MAKE ME BIG ALL OF A SUDDEN.
RIGHT NOW, I'M JUST LOOKING FOR INSPIRATION.


OH...
WHOA! WHAT'S THIS?!

LOOK AT THIS!
THE ENTIRE CANVAS IS RED!
THAT'S PROBABLY JUST THE UNDERCOAT OR BLOTTING FOR A NEW PAINTING.
OH, I WAS THINKING IT WAS CURSED.
HUH?
IT'S BEEN VARNISHED AND FINISHED. SO THIS IS COMPLETE?
IS THIS A PAINTING?
MORIAKI KOUZA-BUROU: "LOCK."
ON CLOSER LOOK, I CAN SEE SOME FAINT TRACES OF A DRAWING...
THAT'S THE ONE, ARASHI-YAMA.

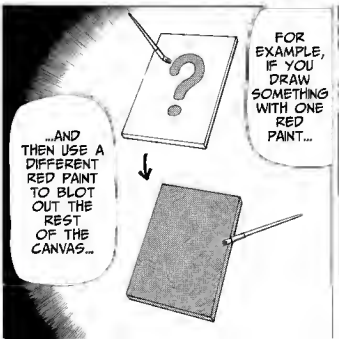
...WHEN I NOTICED THAT ONE OF THE PAINTINGS HAD A SECOND LAYER.
LAST MONTH, I WAS TRYING TO CLEAN UP THE REMAINING PAINTINGS...
AFTER SWALLOWING MY PRIDE AND PREPARING TO JUMP OFF A WATERFALL...
I GREW ANXIOUS AS I WONDERED WHAT THIS MIGHT MEAN.
NATSUHIKO-SAN, WHAT IS THIS?!
MOTHER
WHEN I REMOVED THE PAINTING, I FOUND THE RED CANVAS BELOW.
...AND WHY YOU BROUGHT US TO YOUR HOME.
SO THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME...
YOU MUST REALLY HATE TALKING TO ME!
...I DECIDED TO ASK FOR YOUR OPINION AGAIN...

TO BE FRANK...
SO "LOCK" WAS THE TITLE OF THIS PAINTING.
THIS IS THE PAINTING THAT WAS ON TOP, HUH?
WAIT, ARE YOU SURE THAT IT WAS COINCIDENCE THAT BROUGHT ME HERE?
?!
BUT WHEN YOU TOLD ME YOU WANTED TO SEE THE PAINTINGS, I GOT GOOSE-BUMPS.
...I DON'T BELIEVE IN FATE OR COINCI-DENCE.
IN OTHER WORDS...
EVEN AN AMATEUR KNOWS HOW TO PAINT A CANVAS RED.
THAT RED CANVAS WAS DRAWN BY SOMETHING WITHOUT ANY ARTISTIC TALENT, NOT YOUR GRANDFATHER!


DON'T BE STUPID !!
OKAY, OKAY...
IF YOU WANT TO GO ON A DATE WITH ME, JUST ASK!!
THIS RED PAINTING WAS DRAWN BY YOU AS AN EXCUSE TO INVITE ME TO YOUR HOME!
バーン
BAM

...I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT KOUZABUROU-SAN WOULD HAVE PAINTED THE CANVAS RED FOR NO REASON.
AFTER SEEING THE PAINTINGS AT HER HOUSE AND THE PAINTINGS HERE...

MY TURN!
HEY!


?
FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU DRAW SOMETHING WITH ONE RED PAINT...
...AND THEN USE A DIFFERENT RED PAINT TO BLOT OUT THE REST OF THE CANVAS...

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PAINT...
...SO YOU CAN GET DIFFERENT TEXTURES WHILE USING THE SAME SHADE OF RED.

IT MAKES SENSE, AT LEAST.
AND SO...
...I'M GUESSING THAT WAS KOUZA-BUROU-SAN'S OBJECTIVE.
...OVER TIME, AS THE PAINT FADES, THE DRAWING WILL RESURFACE.
I STILL THINK THAT THERE MUST BE SOME MEAN-ING BEHIND THIS RED PAINTING, THOUGH.
...AND I COULD BE ENTIRELY WRONG.
BUT THERE'S NO TELLING THAT THE COLORS WILL EVER BE THAT DIFFERENT...
TO ENJOY ART, YOU HAVE TO ENJOY IT OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME.
I KNOW THAT CAN BE HARD FOR YOU, MR. MORIAKI.
IT'S ABSURD TO THINK YOU CAN LOOK AT A PAINTING AND ARRIVE AT THE SAME ANSWER EVERY TIME.
I SEE. SO IT'S TOO EARLY TO SAY ANY-THING.

DON'T YOU KNOW I'M A TEACHER?
IT'S MY JOB TO OBSERVE THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME.
THAT'S A CLEVER RESPONSE FOR A STICK-IN-THE-MUD LIKE YOU.
BY THE WAY, RYOU-CHIN...
I'VE DECIDED THAT I WANT THE PAINTING I WAS A MODEL FOR.
I'M THINKING THAT I SHOULD HOLD ONTO THE PAINTING AS AN INVESTMENT...
...IN ANTICIPATION OF YOU MAKING IT BIG.
WELL...
I GUESS THAT'S ONE WAY TO PROVIDE ENCOURAGEMENT.

CHAPTER 121 / END

あとがき

これまでお付き合い頂いている勘の良い皆様は既にお気付きの事と思いますがこの巻は「似たもの」「似て非なるもの」というテーマで歩鳥と亀井堂の因縁の師弟関係を中心に描きました。

世の中には自分と同じ顔をした人間が複数人存在する、とは昔から言われていますが僕のドッペルゲンガーもこれまでに二例見付かっています。

一例目は大学時代に何度も目撃されたソックリさんで、何でも顔、髪型、服装のセンス、歩行姿勢まで似ているのだとか。

友人や後輩達から度々目撃報告がありましたが、結局僕自身はそいつに会えず終いで卒業しました。

二例目は上京した頃住んでいた町で僕と嫁の二人セットのソックリさんが存在していた様です。こちらもラーメン屋のオヤジ、喫茶店のマスターに目撃されています。

果たして彼らは今もどこかの町で暮らしているのでしょうか。

そもそもひとが言うほど自分に似ているのでしょうか…。

石黒正数

アシスタント　甘夏柚子
アリー